

D 570
.32
323d
.R5
COPY 1

Library
UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE

623.8 BUILD. APPL. 312

1917-1919



Class 111

Book 111

PRESENTED BY

**A History of
Battery F 323d Field Artillery**

A History
of
BATTERY F
323d FIELD ARTILLERY

BY
McDONALD H. RIGGS
RUTHERFORD H. PLATT, JR.

PRIVATELY PRINTED BY
JOHN B. DEMPSEY
CLEVELAND, OHIO

DEDICATION

*This book is dedicated to the
brave men, living and dead, who as
Battery F, Three Hundred and
Twenty-third Field Artillery, served
their country in the World War.*

ROLL OF SACRIFICE

KILLED IN ACTION

Phillips, George, Nellie, Ohio.....October 29, 1918

DIED OF DISEASE

Colville, Ross L.....January 12, 1918

Ralston, Samuel R., Butler, Pa.....April 7, 1918

Welch, Robert W.....April 17, 1918

Winkle, George A.....April 21, 1918

Vanderlin, Victor P., Butler, Pa.....April 17, 1919

WOUNDED IN ACTION

Barnhardt, Raymond E.....Chicora, Pa.

Hicks, James.....South Portsmouth, Ky.

Koenig, Alfred.....Cleveland, Ohio

Uhlenbrock, Albert T.....Columbus, Ohio

Contents

Foreword	XIII
F Battery	1
Battery F at the Front.....	31
The Great Barrage	38
The Argonne	48
Verdun	61
Brabant Sur Meuse	77
Round Up	97
Orders	132
Station List	144
Rosters	146

List of Illustrations

The Top	3
The American "75"	6
"Posts"	8
The "Agapenor"	10
Vin Blanc	12
"Hommes 40"	27
U. S. S. Von Steuben.....	28
Tode Dunett	71
Brabant Hill	77
Lt. Bradford	88
Bois de Montfaucon.....	97
For the Commander-in-Chief.....	111
"Lest Auld Acquaintance Be Forgot".....	114
Ecurey (Nov. 11, 1918)	126

Foreword

WHEN it was determined to publish a regimental history, it was understood that it was to consist of chapters contributed by each battery. For various causes this plan has been abandoned in favor of an account of the accomplishment of the regiment as a whole. The chief reason, therefore, for the printing of this book is to provide each member of Battery F with a permanent record of the part taken by his battery in the World War.

The opportunity thus afforded to the battery commander to express his personal admiration for the members of his organization, both officers and men, and his appreciation of the service they rendered, is gratifying. Probably no unit in the A. E. F. was more unpromising at its inception. When Bob Simpson introduced his aggregation of "wops" and "hunkies" to the battery officers, it was with despair in their hearts that they attempted the roll-call. The humor of the situation appeared at the initial muster, when Lieutenant-Colonel Morrison was forced to laugh outright at the men who, failing to recognize their names when pronounced in English, stood stolidly in place and did not answer "here" to the roll-call. The foot drill of the newly formed squads on the stubble fields of Camp Sherman seemed ludicrous to the officers, soldiers of all of three months, but the recruit's willingness to learn and his outwardly cheerful acceptance of discipline soon gave confidence to his commanders. Colonel Morrison optimistically insisted that F Battery, because of its diverse membership was sure to render a good account of itself. The battery commander shared his confidence and he was not disappointed.

A soldier in the National Army had a unique experience. Taken by law from his home, thrown into a barracks with a couple of hundred strangers, many of them from different antecedents and surroundings, he was, in the course of time, given a uniform like unto two million other uniforms; ordered to do many seemingly foolish things, which often enough were foolish; punished for strange misdemeanors;

bossed by officers of little more military experience than he; deprived of all semblance of independence and compelled to perform disagreeable and strange labor for small pay. Drawn from a world where within very wide bounds each man is master of his individual life, he became a cog in a very rigid organization, where by his own will he could be only a good soldier or a poor soldier.

That this transformation was not accompanied by more friction is due chiefly to the adaptability of the young American. When the first contingents arrived at Camp Sherman, the newly fledged company commanders were anxious as to the attitude of their men, but hardly a week had passed before it was clearly recognized that there was to be no difficulty in maintaining military discipline, and that the officers could have the ungrudging support of their men, in the effort to mold their units into effective fighting machines. From the first days in Camp Sherman to the last gathering around the wooden boards at Camp Merritt, the entire loyalty of every man, officer, and private of Battery F was felt and relied upon by the battery commander.

At Camp Sherman this spirit meant great progress. Much was learned during the first few months. Foot drill soon changed from a job to a bore. Cleanliness of quarters and person was axiomatic. Military courtesy, at first irksome, grew to be second nature. Eventually the guns came, and the gunners became so practised that Battery F was chosen to represent the regiment in the brigade exhibition problem when it fired Colonel Ashburn's famous barrage—the barrage which rolled both ways. Here the gun crews abolished the probable error. After the completion of the barrage, General Glenn ordered a salvo fired at the first "enemy" trench. On the original data, two shells landed squarely in the trench, one exploded on the parapet, and one hit the parados. The drivers also brought compliments to the battery by the dashing manner in which they, with the first sergeant in command, brought the limbers to the battery position under the eyes of the division commander, who leaned out of his automobile curious to see what drivers had the skill and the nerve to pass him at the trot in close column with one wheel in the ditch and the other within six inches of his fender. The long hours of equitation during the many weeks of bitterly cold winter

weather had caused some grumbling, but this drill carried on under the watchful and skillful direction of the regimental commander had made excellent horsemen. The battery was to profit by this in France where the drivers of Battery F always successfully maneuvered their teams over most difficult ground.

For nearly a year the regiment lived and drilled at Camp Sherman. After the first few days it was commanded first by Lt.-Col. William F. Morrison and then by Col. Louis T. Boisseau. Both of these officers held the welfare of their men to be a first consideration. The battery commanders could generally count on a sympathetic reception of all suggestions for increasing the comfort of their batteries. When just complaints were received at regimental headquarters, emanating from the batteries, the causes were removed where possible, or the complaints were forwarded to higher authority. Every effort was made to clothe the men and to provide good food, and when shortages occurred it was seldom through neglect by regimental officers. In the spring, night marches became the fashion. Each night as the returning regiment filed past headquarters on the way to the stables, it was inspected by Colonel Boisseau himself, who personally gave each battery commander an order as to the care of the horses and the provisioning of the men with bread and hot coffee. He was the last commanding officer of the 323d F. A. to see his men to bed.

Finally the great day came and the regiment set out for France. Sixty new recruits had been assigned prior to leaving Camp Sherman, but the battery was able to assimilate these men. No officer in the division could have been more proud of his outfit or more confident in its ability to face the future than the captain of Battery F. Whatever was ahead, the battery could meet it with the knowledge that it was an organization composed of men who stuck together, who knew how to get things done, and who could learn a new job or a new way to do an old one. Moreover, they had mastered the elements of military duty. They obeyed promptly and cheerfully. They knew how to ride a horse and to drive a team. They could shoot a three-inch field piece with speed and accuracy. They could march, they could make and pack their rolls. They knew how to care

for themselves and for their horses when in the field. The battery had able, enthusiastic and well-trained junior officers. The first sergeant was both loved and feared by the men. The sergeants were leaders, the corporals could lay their guns, the cooks could get a meal out of a tin can. And all were aware that we did not know it all.

The following pages contain two vivid accounts of the work of Battery F in France and Germany and it is not proposed to review here its service in the A. E. F. Nevertheless certain events and facts stand out in relief as illustrating the qualities which especially increased the respect and admiration for his men which the B. C. had long before acquired. First of all there came to Maure a new colonel. At the time any change from the indifference of the preceding commanding officer seemed welcome. For the enlisted men of the regiment it was probably amusing to see their officers run off on a fool's errand at the command "Go." Nor did they object to the interruption of a gun drill at the 75's by a wild game of follow the leader. But they, too, felt the effects of a wild man's whims when, after having been crowded into the second story loft of a barn, they were commanded to jump out, the last man to be court-martialed, or when aroused out of a well-earned sleep by the call to arms, they were ordered to turn the colonel's fourgon around. For the battery commander the four weeks at Coetquidan were filled with anxiety. The control of his battery seemed to be slipping away from him under the disorganizing authority of an irrational mind. Every principle of good discipline, of organization, of correct instruction was violated and the results in the battery were apparent. It was with thankfulness that the B. C. boarded the train for the front, once more the master of his unit and not likely to be interfered with. To his great satisfaction, he found that he still had the same dependable outfit.

Ignorance or incompetence on the part of higher commanders, when converted into action through their orders, leads to very great worry and mental distress on the part of subordinate officers, who see their men compelled to endure unnecessary and sometimes very great hardship, dangers, and even death, and yet are themselves unable to alter the situation. Indeed the company officers must usually give the

ultimate order which causes the disaster. In spite of the echelon near Esnes and of the gun position selected for us at Ecurey, F Battery had no casualties on this account, but many irritating incidents occurred which called for the exercise of the utmost patience and self control. At Cote-de-Talou a change in command took place. The new colonel announced to his officers that from henceforth the regiment would cease to be a pink tea and pajama outfit. At this time there were officers and men who were in the saddle sixty continuous hours. It was on Cote-de-Talou that men carrying ammunition fell to the ground exhausted and unconscious and could only be aroused to the essential tasks by kicks on the feet and legs. It was a day later that at noon the second battalion was ordered deprived of its only meal in twenty-four hours so that all might be ready to limber up the guns at dusk. Every officer and man in the battalion, except the colonel, knew that half an hour was sufficient time in which to prepare for the movement, yet only the intervention of the ever intelligent and energetic battalion commander, Major Fibich, saved the batteries from a night of starving. A week later this same colonel telephoned the second battalion command post several times one busy morning to know why a few Y. M. C. A. cookies had been distributed among the men at the guns while none had been sent to his dugout. Such stories were repeated throughout the regiment and exaggerated in true soldier fashion. They were the cause of much forceful language, but they deserve remembrance for the fact that they did not lessen the ardor and willingness of the men. These things, however, were trivial in comparison to the blunders of higher officers. In war, individuals and great bodies of men must often be sacrificed to attain a military purpose. But this justification can never be made of the conduct of the marches of the 158th F. A. Brigade. There can be no excuse for ordering an entire brigade of field artillery to be prepared to take the same road at nearly the same place at the same moment. There could be no military reason for allowing the necessarily slow moving, road blocking, heavy regiment to lead the column. Yet both of these stupid blunders were committed up to the date of the armistice. The suffering of the men and animals because of the long delays in the rain and cold is beyond description. Their vitality was

greatly impaired and yet Battery F never lost a man by straggling. During the war it never had a straggler and only once thereafter, when two men came into a German village a few minutes behind the column. For the battery this is its proudest boast. No greater test of all soldierly qualities could have been made than by these night marches on the shell-torn, traffic-crowded roads, in the cold and the wet. Yet neither the battery nor any member of it ever faltered by the wayside. The strength of purpose and the unfailing fortitude thus shown are more admirable in a soldier than all else save courage.

The march into Germany was made in daylight and in the main was well conducted. Errors, such as the omission of the noonday halt and meal, were eventually remedied. But what was saved to the men by more intelligent direction was lost by a brutal conception of discipline. The discipline usually enforced by the officer of the old regular army is based on fear. Punishment is the club by which men are driven to their tasks. In the A. E. F., after the armistice as well as during active military operations, the S. O. S. loomed before every army officer, from the division commander down, who incurred the displeasure of his superior. The exercise of this power was summary and arbitrary. The unfortunate officer had not even the benefit of a court martial or a trial before an impartial tribunal. Subsequent inquiry at the reclassification depot, even if it ended in exoneration, did not remove the disgrace and shame previously suffered. No one can deny that fear as a motive is potent and certainly the enlisted men felt its effects. The fear that some inspector might criticise the appearance of the brigade led to the most outrageous requirements. No one ever justly complained of strict and elaborate care of the animals. Every man knew that the mobility of his battery depended upon the survival of the horses and that the lives of the horses depended upon the attention given them. The ever present want of grooming kits complicated matters and made the chores difficult. All the more vexations on this account were the orders that before the men could rest after an all day's march every carriage and every strap of harness must be cleaned of mud, although within five minutes of its taking the road they would again be

spattered. The three days' halts, ostensibly for rest, were harder than marching. Under constant threats of the S. O. S., the battery commanders were compelled to tear their harness down, scrape each strap with sticks, wash it in water, although there was seldom any saddle soap or other dressing. Incessant inspections were made of the exterior of the men and material, but no inspector ever glanced through the bore of the guns and very seldom was time allotted to the men for bathing themselves or washing their underclothes and socks. The smearing of the gun carriages and helmets with the precious recoil oil became a joke in Germany when there were comparatively comfortable quarters, good food and plenty of sleep—an expensive joke, to be sure. But on the march these absurd requirements were harsh and morale-destroying. Heretofore the discipline in F Battery had always been based on the principal that fear is a less effective motive than good will; that men can be led where they cannot be forced; that punishment is seldom desirable, but encouragement always so; and that, when generously treated, men are honest and faithful, loyal and hard-working, and that real discipline is self-imposed. So far these principles had worked in practice. Since abuse transforms good will to resentment, and injustice destroys loyalty, and imposition makes hard-working men loafers, and since angry men, fearing punishment sham work but accomplish nothing, it was not surprising that the entire battery showed the deleterious effect of the "discipline" enforced by the high commanders. But these things were overcome. By the time the battery had occupied Dernbach it had once more regained its esprit. It never had accomplished more than it did during the first week in the new home. There is nothing more praiseworthy in its history. As it had previously overcome physical hardship, it had now recovered its morale, lessened through no fault of its own.

Of the work done on the firing line, little need be said here. Despite the brief time for training in France, the 323d F. A. knew how to perform its task and did it in a manner above criticism. Its skill of course was relative and great improvement was shown as time went on. Had the war continued, it would have reached a perfection unsurpassed by any artillery. As it was, it never failed to lay down satisfac-

torily any fire which was requested of it. When first the shells left the muzzles of the guns on Cote-de-Talou, all felt the elation of having begun the fulfillment of the great purpose for which we had come. Those seven hours were hours of great joy to the gunners. Many who when they came to France had not known why America had entered the war, had long since learned it from what they had seen to the west of the Meuse. The Yank did not see visions. He was not looking into the sky at mirages. He gazed straight ahead and if he could see further than the first Hun, it was the Rhine and Berlin that he saw. So a few days later on Brabant Hill, in spite of all the weariness of body, the battery was filled with exultation when, in plain sight of the gunners and under the protection of their fire, the line of the attacking dough-boys swept up and over the neighboring crest. For once the battery saw the effect of its shells upon the enemy and it knew its power as an instrument of offense. But that was the last the gunners saw of their own work and the next three weeks tested the stamina of the men. Constant firing strained their fortitude and incessant shelling put their courage to proof. In nothing did they fail. Day and night, they sent messages of victory in the form of high explosive and gas into the German lines; night and day, they took without flinching the pounding with which the enemy reciprocated. Finally came that morning in Ecurey, when, in the midst of the hottest half hour of the war, the wires brought the command, "Cease fire. The armistice is signed." Never in all history was there more universal and more profound satisfaction. Peace reigned in the Western Front. The *Allies* had won the war.

Of his share in the victory every man of F Battery may be proud. The American Army performed miracles and achieved a tremendous triumph. The part of each unit was very small in relation to the whole. But such as it was, if well taken, it called out all that was in the individual of bravery, determination, good humor, and moral and physical endurance. None of us did everything perfectly. Each must be conscious of faults committed. But Battery F, 32nd F. A. did its full duty and did it splendidly. That its record was as faultless as was human is due to the character of the men who composed it.

JOHN B. DEMPSEY.

F Battery

HAVING a horror of the idea of performing the duties of an enlisted man in the war that was sure to come, many civilians rushed into the various officers training camps, that were opened to fit men to be officers in the new National Army. After three long months of the hardest training possible, all, with few exceptions, emerged with commissions, ranking from Majors down to Second Lieutenants. With special order No. 89 Headquarters Citizens Training Camp, Fort Benjamin Harrison, Ind., August 15, 1917, placing them on active duty, and Regimental Special Order No. 1, 323rd L. F. A., tucked away in the pocket of their newly acquired uniform, Captain John B. Dempsey, First Lieutenant Herman N. Archer, Second Lieutenants Boyce E. Bradford, Lee W. Breese, Floyd B. Calhoun, Jefferson Patterson and Willard Wilson became the "last but not least" battery of the regiment, namely "F," reporting for duty with battery August 30, 1917.

On September 4th, a train loaded with the first contingent of Western Pennsylvania men for Camp Sherman rolled out of the station at Rochester, Pa., and many a fellow started on what he thought would be a short vacation. Pulling into Chillicothe, Ohio, at dusk on September 5th, we were lined up in our first formation while one man, supposedly an officer, looked down our throats, for what, no one ever knew, and another went through our pockets and baggage to see if we had a "quart or a gun." We were then loaded in large trucks and rushed out to Camp Sherman, Section P, where at regimental headquarters we were given a bit of cold supper; then we were issued two O. D. blankets and a bed sack, filling our bed sacks with straw we found a cot and had some "Sergeant" whom we were scared to death of at the time, show us how "we make a bed in the *Regulars*."

The next morning about five-thirty we were awakened by an awful noise from the bugler, that noise we have never forgotten. No one stirred until a voice bellowed, "outside,

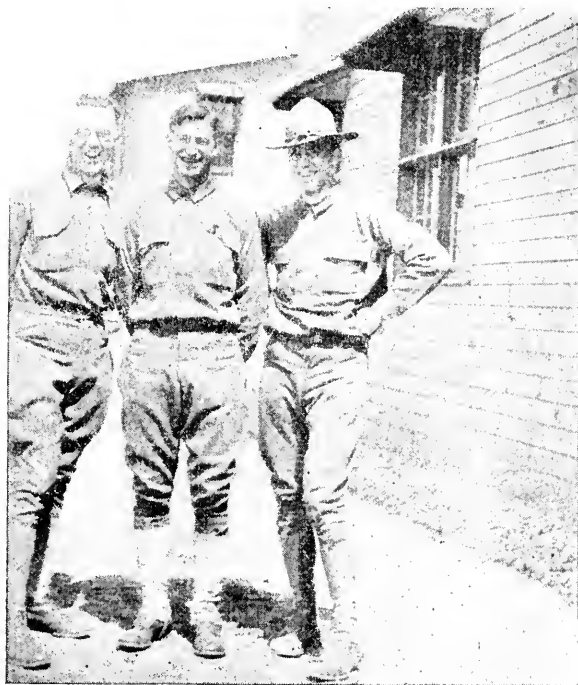
A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

everybody." There the roll was called to see if any of us had gotten homesick during the night and decided that the army was no place for us. Everyone being present we were left to wash and eat breakfast. Shortly after breakfast we were all fallen out to pick up the cigarette butts and papers we had thrown out of the window the night before. Then we were sorted out like sheep and assigned to the different batteries. Little was done except police duty until another shipment of "fighters" could be received, so that each battery might have at least a squad. On September 9, 1917, at 8 P. M. the second contingent arrived and after going through the preliminaries they were assigned to the different batteries. Battery "F" now had 18 men and on September 12th, headed by Captain Dempsey we took possession of our new home, barracks No. 23 P. Army style we cleaned house and made the place fit to live in. Our family was prophesied to increase by about 175 men within the next few days, so 200 iron cots were arranged in rows and a bed sack filled with straw was placed on each one.

After drilling for about ten days on the smooth corn stubbled drill fields, with "Society Brand" shoes, which suddenly became too small for us, and civilian clothes without a change, with the sun at 106° Fahrenheit, the good news came that we would be issued uniforms. First came marching shoes, broad toes and plenty large, what a relief. Next came breeches, if they were large enough in the leg they would go around the waist about twice, and right here was where Sergeant Voemastek's troubles started. Then came the O. D. Shirts. *Wool* shirts in summer! Only officers would have the heart to make a man wear them, and they had cotton O. D.'s so why should they care. Finally we were all outfitted with the *necessary* underwear and socks and then came the campaign hat, never did you think there were so many square-heads in the world until you saw the bunch rummaging through a pile of new, stiff service hats, trying to find one that would sit on their dome without covering their ears. Everyone dressed up in the new outfit, was lined up and marched over to Section B, where we were given that never to be forgotten "first shot." After we had

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

helped to bring back to life those who had fainted, we staggered back over to the barracks and hit the cot. In an hour or so our shoulders started getting sore, we had an awful headache, if anybody spoke to us we wanted them court-martialed, we couldn't eat any supper and every time we tried to roll over during the night the fellow next to us heard something like this *-*!?"!?"*-*.. Next morning our



Brandon

Rayburn

Simpson

THE "TOP"

left arm was sore and swollen and then we happened to remember that while one man was pumping typhoid fever into our backs another was scratching our arm and making it sick with the smallpox. By order, we were given 24 hours off duty, which started many a "Goldbricker's" career.

Army life, like married life, is one damned thing after another. Having gone through a thorough physical inspection every day for about a week, to see if our heart was strong

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

enough to stand the disappointments that were coming, if our lungs were strong enough to stand the gas that was ever present, and if our eyes were good enough to see through everything that we were told, and the medics having decided that everyone was perfectly able to shoulder his share of the burden, we were started to work building dummy three-inch guns out of the scrap lumber that was lying about. This was considered necessary to teach the "recruit" the difference between the Artillery and the Infantry. They also proved to be of great assistance to the officers in establishing prestige. They would gather the recruits about themselves and the dummy guns and explain the uses of all the absent parts, the parts that could not be made from wood, leaving the impression that they had digested three-fourths of the Artillery Manuals ever issued.

The colonel not being satisfied with the architecture of his home in Section P ordered his official family to move into Section R. Gathering together what few worldly possessions we now had, we took possession of Section R and made ready to receive the third contingent. On the night of September 18, 1917, a train pulled up behind the Base Hospital and a mass of muttering, grumbling men rolled out into the darkness and lined up for roll-call. The sputtering resembled the hum of a Chop Suey Shop: Vincenzo Colantonio, Guiseppe Jolosyuski, Policronis Pagonachi, Bronislaw Ricinski and Dementrio Sarikake. Each man not only had a name, but, like a box car, had a number, and with no response to the summons by name, Lieutenant Platt resorted to the numbers and found that most of the men knew their numbers better than their names. All men being present, physically if not mentally, they were assigned to the various batteries and then were put under the charge of the acting non-commissioned officers—those old hands who had served at least ten days in the army.

These men were put through the mill and assorting process, some were discharged on account of physical ailments, some were alien enemies and then came the great outlet; all men who were undesirable for this branch of service could be transferred to the Depot Brigade. Captain Dempsey seiz-

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

ing his opportunity, transferred every man whose name he could not pronounce. A few, as is always the case, tried to get exempted even at this late date. For instance, our friend Sullivan Rock, whose leg had been broken between two box cars, years ago, claimed that a man with a box car leg was not fit for a soldier. After pleading for exemption on the ground of a poor, old, dependent mother back home, with no success, he all of a sudden became unable to walk on account of his leg. Upon the recommendation of the medics for light work he was given a job as permanent Latrine Orderly.

On the evening of October 7th, the regiment was assembled in front of Regimental Headquarters for formal retreat. Here the men of the battery saw for the first time a few of their friends come into possession of that which made them non-commissioned officers.

Many of us fellows will have to dress up a story in some favorable manner in order to explain to those at home "just why we never were made non-com's." But don't be afraid, just tell them that the *best* men in the battery were "bucks" and they'll let you off easy. Many a Saturday afternoon or Sunday we did kitchen police or stable police, because sometime during the week we had forgotten we were in the army and had told some corporal to go to Hell! Remember how Captain Dempsey would call us into the orderly room, after the corporal had gone at break-neck speed to tell him how he had been insulted, and stamping his foot on the floor would say "I will not have it, *I will not have it.*" Then how we would salute, make an about face and go out, all the time telling him, under our breath of course, just where *he* could go.

The shrewdest men in all the battery have tried to discover where Lieutenant Archer conceived the idea of digging the dugout in the back yard. Many a hot summer's afternoon, with the sweat running down our backs and the sand running down our neck we shoveled sand out of that twenty-foot hole, planted 10' x 10' posts and built walls out of 2' x 4's, to walk out the next morning and find that there had been a land slide and our board wall was buried under more than two tons of sand. After a few suggestions from the French Captain, Tommy-Martin, the dugout was finished and "F"

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

Battery was the sole possessor of a real shell proof dugout, which a few months later we were sorry had not been included in over seas equipment.

Weird and interesting were the make-shifts by which we learned the drill for cannoneers, mounted and dismounted. We will long remember the splinters we ran into our fingers from the "guas," or the skinned shins we had from falling over them, in changing posts. After an hour of that they would drag us out into the field and try to teach us what



THE AMERICAN "75"

No. 2 of the rear rank did in "Squads Right" and just what No. 2 of the front rank did in "Squads Left." Captain would then come out with his notebook and pencil and have some newly-made sergeant take his section out, give commands, explain how to execute them, and then have the section do it.

You were graded and that was given you as an excuse for not being able to get a pass home for Thanksgiving. For many of us, it was the first Thanksgiving away from home, and there seemed to be no occasion for thankfulness until the battery football players came home the victors and we came into a dinner of roast turkey, mashed potatoes, cran-

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

berry sauce, radishes, onions, celery, green beans, pie, ice cream and cake, coffee, two good cigars and cigarettes, and all the cider you wanted. After the dinner the battery assembled in the annex and had a good time watching Mark Hill clean up on a dozen challengers. After hearing a quartet render some discords, Captain Dempsey gave a short patriotic speech. For the first time since we were inoculated, we did not have to stand retreat.

We had been so busy learning our General Orders and saying them backwards for everyone from the colonel down to the sergeant of the guard, that we had forgotten to put in for a pass for Christmas. It did not make much difference for as has always been the case, there were a certain few who would go regardless of requests. Well, some of us went home and *some of us didn't*. Those who did had a big time, and those who didn't had a fine time eating the turkey and things that somehow drifted into camp for that day. Remember how Captain Dempsey obtained his orders to attend Fort Sill just in time to go to Oklahoma via Cleveland about December 23rd, and how the other officers would argue over who wanted to see "Her" the worst. We were all back by New Years, and reveille an hour late and "no work" except feeding, watering, and grooming the horses was all that marked this as the beginning of a new year.

By this time we had real American three-inch guns and about 150 horses. With a blast from Sergeant Rayburn's whistle we would grab a grooming kit, stand to heel and "By Detail" commence grooming. After we had groomed for an hour, never saying a word (out loud) and if we had not lost an ear or had any arms or legs kicked off, we went up to the gun park and with such patience as only Captain Archer possessed we were drilled and redrilled in the "School of the Gun Squad" first mounted and then dismounted. While most of us were doing this, there was a group of "Selects" out over the hills learning to talk by signs, dots, dashes, and flags (which later on proved to be a great help in "Cootie Drill") and to talk over the field telephone. Now, anyone can talk over a telephone in "Cewilian" life, but to always

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

remember to say "Mr" while talking to the colonel, or "sixth battery" when you mean "F," was not so easy as you might think.

During the winter, the battery was visited by two epidemics and for several weeks we were quarantined. As the ambulance rolled up and took away meningitis and pneumonia victims, we felt for the first time the dangers we were facing. Ross Colville, Samuel Ralston, Robert Welch and George Winkle died in the Base Hospital. These men



"Posts"

gave their lives for the uniform they wore as truly as if they had died on the battlefields in France.

Then came the time when the battery should take its turn with the other batteries of the regiment firing the four American three-inch guns which the regiment possessed at this time, at Stony Creek. Many and interesting were our experiences on the marches to and from and while firing on the range. Do you remember the big Mince Pies at Pride Station store? We will never forget the night practice marches up and down the valley, and such experiences as the Columbus Interurban car dashing through our column, throwing Furgiuvelli from his horse and sending horses with carriages in all directions. Then the divisions started moving over seas

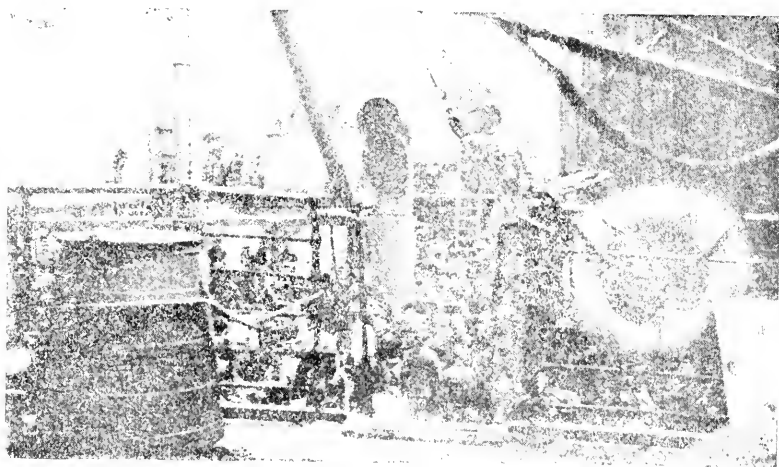
A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

and, as usual, last of all came the 158th. One day we were shoeing horses, preparing to stay all summer and the next day we pulled shoes, preparing to leave for France. Working every hour of the day and night for a few days, our sailing orders were rushed to completion and at 1:15 P. M. o'clock June 2, 1918, after many farewells, we boarded the train and started east. At ten o'clock the next morning we detrained and marched through the streets of Hornell, New York, for much needed exercise. Arriving at Port Jarvis, New York, at seven P. M., we were given permission to explore the town until 10:30. Pulling out of the railroad yards at 6 A. M. June 4th, we arrived at New York at 11 o'clock. Every man getting his barracks bag we were loaded on a ferry boat and sent up the East River, passing many ferries loaded with troops; we semaphored to them finding out where they were from and where they were going, giving our identification at the same time, also seeing, for the first time for many of us, the Brooklyn Bridge, the Woolworth Building and the Metropolitan tower. We landed early in the afternoon in Brooklyn and took a train for Camp Mills. At 4 P. M. we marched with full pack into camp. Here we spent five days sleeping in squad tents and sand. This was like all other "Army" camps that we had experienced, except for the day in New York City, the good eats, which were soon to become a mere memory, the outdoor cold showers and last but by no means least the Bo Koo inspections. After sitting around all night waiting for orders to entrain, we marched to a switch and loaded at 4 A. M., June 10, 1918. Arriving in Philadelphia, Pa., at 9 A. M. being served hot coffee and Red Cross rolls by the Red Cross women, at the docks, we were carefully checked and filed onto the Good Ship *Agapenor* at 10 A. M. Having explored all recesses of the boat, having tried on half the life belts to see if they were all the same, being satisfied that the old boat was able to perform her duty, we pulled out of the harbor at 2:45 P. M. Stopping in New York harbor at 4 P. M. June 12, we again pushed out and arrived in Halifax 11 A. M., Sunday, June 16th. We took on coal

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

and provisions and also mailed a card home. Joining our convoy Monday morning we sailed out to sea at 2 P. M., June 17th.

Nothing much exciting happening other than one boat of the convoy firing at a "submarine" on June 26th. Everyone seemingly enjoyed the trip except Emery, Irwin, Covert, Samerdyke, and Tompie Young and even they were routed out on deck every day by the aroma from the slum, not to eat, but to the contrary. The canteen run by the "Bally H'englishman" kept many a poor boy from starving and the



THE "ACAPENOR"

riling that Captain Demrose made, making everybody learn and say their General Orders before they could get off the boat helped to spend many a long hour for us. On the morning of June 28th, at 8 A. M., we were towed into the docks at Birkenhead, England, and after cleaning up the old tub, Battery "F" style, we unloaded to the music of a Scotch Laddies Band. Marching through the streets, lined with the wretched British cockneys, to the railroad station, we were loaded into a train that none of us will ever forget; small compartments, eight men to a compartment and more comfortable than you would think. After entraining we were served with hot coffee, rolls and cigarettes.

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

Stopping at Birmingham about 7 P. M., we were given hot coffee by the W. A. A. C.'s and Hell by the first sergeant because we stood out on the platform for a minute longer than he thought we should. At 12:30 that night we detrained at Winchester, England, and marched through the streets, by the light of a glorious full moon, to Camp Winnal Downs. We were three days at this rest camp and then crossed the channel on an ancient tub and here is where our friend "Cootie" was enlisted in the battery.

On the morning of July 2nd, we landed at Le Havre, France, and spent the day at another so-called "Rest Camp." Here we laid everything out for inspection, and after it was covered with about three inches of sand Captain Dempsey announced the colonel would *not* inspect. On the morning of July 3rd, we marched to station and entrained, riding all day and night and all of July 4th, in the "8 Chevaux, 40 Hommes" style of Classy Slow Freight, living on Corned Willy and hard tack. Early in the evening we detrained at Maure, France, pitched pup tents and stayed over night. Here a few "buddies" were picked up for sampling the French wine after taps.

Next morning the Second Battalion struck tents and marched 8 kilometers to Loheac, which was to be our home for seven weeks. Close order drill, long road hikes, gun drill and "cidre" were the chief events of any importance. The marches to the river swimming, and the back yard parties (where you fried veal steak and eggs and had a bottle of rouge or blanc wine and if it was soon after payday perhaps a bottle of champagne) are memorable good times which stand out in our life at Loheac. The night when "F" guard arrested "D's" first sergeant and put him in the guard house, so that his captain had to come and get him out; the fight between "E" and "F" the morning Angert broke his leg; the night the bunch of non-com's slipped by Sergeant Simpson and his guard, whom he had posted all over town to catch them, are episodes in our life at Loheac, not to mention "Spike."

The bugle blowing at 4 A. M., breakfast at 4:30, we started for Camp Coetquidan at 7 under the command

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

of Lieut. Col. McKinlay; we were rushed at a "mile a minute" speed to Maure, where we rested an hour and finished our march to camp at 3:30, tired, hungry, thirsty, and dirty.

Here we were placed in barracks and a lot of real work followed. We received our horses and started making daily trips to the firing range. Cleaning and adjusting harness,



Bell

Waller

McGinn

Smiley

VIN BLANC

cleaning and oiling guns and caissons, pistol practice, schools of all kinds, grooming, watering, feeding and being on the lookout for "Spike" the "when I say go, Go!" Colonel, were among the everyday routine. Such experiences as the time we fired all day in the range, changed positions, went into the woods pitched shelter tents, and had just gotten to sleep in a nice little pool of water, when the bugle blew and we had to strike tents, make rolls in the dark, harness and hitch and go into camp are what prepared us for such

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

happenings as the night "Spike" had Call to Arms blown on the Montfaucon front to have a fire put out in a two by twice dug-out. By the time the batteries had made their appearance the fire was out, so "Spike" had us turn his fourgon around to keep us out in the rain as punishment.

Saying good-bye to those every evening parades, and also to the "fifty centimes for Rosie" girls in the restaurants near camp, on Sunday morning September 22nd, through a drenching rain, we marched to Guer and entrained for the front. After loading the horses and materiel, we were assigned to a car, part of the train being second and third class coaches and the rest "side door Pullmans." Enjoying the rest and the scenery and also the extra jam and things that had been bought for the occasion, we spent two days and nights on the train. Passing within a few miles of Paris we were able to see the Eiffel tower, arriving at Revigny at 7 A. M. September 24, 1918. After a breakfast of Corned Willy, bread, and coffee, we hurriedly unloaded materiel and horses, harnessed and hitched and at 10:15 started our march to the firing line. At Revigny we saw our first shelled town and marching until 2:30 P. M. we pulled into a field at Villotte-devant-Louppy. Here we had dinner, washed up after our long train ride, ate supper and at 8:20 P. M. started on our first *night hike* on the front. At 3 o'clock the morning of September 25th, we pulled into Waly. Camouflaging carriages, horses and ourselves in a woods near by we "rested" all day.

We groomed horses, went miles to water them, fed them three times, drew rations, carried forage, cleaned clothes and materiel and then *rested*. Late in the afternoon word came that we had arrived just in time to take part in the big drive that was to start that night. We made rolls, harnessed and hitched and at 7 o'clock started on a march that will long be remembered as one with thrills and strange sensations. No one was allowed to smoke a cigarette for fear of aeroplane observation. Messenger motorcycles carrying important despatches were going up and down the column, traffic was moving in three columns, two toward the front and one from the front, ambulances were rushing the

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

wounded back to the hospitals. No man dare to step outside the line of wheels on the left or he would have been killed by the traffic. The rumbling of carriages, the blasts from the whistles of motor drivers, the hum of aeroplanes above, the roar of the big guns in the hills ahead, the continuous flashes in the sky made a fellow think of home as never before. We were just a little more nervous this night than any time since we ran our finger up and down the line of names of draftees in the home town paper. Many times during our frequent halts, boys could be seen with their heads buried under a raincoat or underneath a caisson pulling at a cigarette. Gradually working our way closer and closer to the drama that was taking place before us, we came into a town. Here everything was excitement, not a light in the town, officers and men running from one building to another despatching messengers here and there, loading and starting to the rear ambulances loaded with wounded and dying. Turning to the left off the main road we wound our way through a shell torn field lined with a solid net work of barbed wire. Here the caissons under the command of Lieutenant Bradford joined the caissons from the rest of the regiment and started after ammunition, the guns moving on to go into park at daylight. Filling our caissons with ammunition we parked them along the edge of a woods and rested for two hours. Moving on at 7 o'clock under shell and shrapnel fire we joined the guns at 11 o'clock. Here we saw aeroplanes dropping torches with firing data for the artillery and saw our first air battle. Here, during the afternoon, we saw a German plane bag two Allied observation balloons and saw the observers jump for their lives in parachutes. After watching a thousand or more German prisoners being marched to the rear we moved on and went into position three kilometers north of Parois. Cannoneers dug trail holes and carried ammunition while the drivers took the horses back to Parois to water and then stretched picket lines in the woods on a hill directly back of the guns. The driver left the harness on his horses and slept behind his team so we could move at a moment's notice. Being out of range, unless in a counter attack, the gun crews

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

worked reliefs and were able to snatch a few hours sleep. A few large shells trying to search out a large six-inch naval rifle within a hundred yards of our position kept us awake for a while until weariness got the upper hand of our misgivings. At 8 o'clock, morning of September 27th in a miserable rain we moved forward. We passed through areas where the heaviest fighting had taken place and saw wonderful sights of large guns in position, hundreds of machine gun nests and whole stretches of forest where not a limb was left on a tree.

Moving along a newly made road which had been severely shelled, word came that the road was unpassable further ahead, due to the heavy shelling. Colonel Hennessy pulled his batteries over into the fields so that trucks loaded with "eats" for the dough boys could go on. These trucks could not get through and so they unloaded along side of the road; not having had anything to eat but a small amount of corned beef hash for a couple of days we manœuvered around and got a loaf of bread and anything else we could "salvage" before the M. P.'s were put guarding it. Finding no way to get the supplies up to the doughboys the colonel took charge of them and at the word "Go!" they were distributed among the batteries, giving us our first real meal for several days. Making this place our echelon, the guns were moved a kilometer up the road and put in position one-half kilometer west of Esnes. Here we stayed for six days, carrying the mess from the echelon up to the gun squads, and doing the many and odd jobs that "Spike" found for us. Due to the muddy and crowded conditions of the roads the problem of supplying the firing line with ammunition was a serious one, so a call was sent out for someone to bring up ammunition to batteries located on Montfaucon.

As was ever the spirit of the 323rd, it volunteered to make the trip and on September 30th, at 3 o'clock, a train of caissons filled with shells started for the first line support. Never will we forget that horrible night, pulling through the worst shell torn stretch of woods in the whole Argonne with an engineer every ten yards, shouting out in the coal blackness of the night, "keep to your right, now to your left," passing

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

hundreds of wounded doughboys working their way to the rear and seeing many dead, we reached our goal at midnight, and in a torrent of rain delivered our ammunition to each battery and started back. Not getting far when daylight came we pulled off the road, watered our horses and lined up at an Engineers' kitchen for a cup of hot coffee, and rested for a few hours until we could move on.

Traffic on main road was so congested that it was impossible to move. Continuing our march at noon we pulled out to the main road and waited until 6 P. M., when traffic started to move for the first time since 6 A. M., permitting us to arrive back at the echelon at 4 A. M. on the morning of October 1st. Gathering with the regiment in park at 6 o'clock on evening of October 2nd, we waited until midnight when the order came to move, "F" Battery being the only battery in the regiment to move out without getting a caisson or fourgon in a shell hole. Marching until late the next morning, October 3rd, we pulled into Camp Gallieni, two kilometers east of Nixeville. Establishing this as our echelon, the guns were moved during the night and at daybreak had reached the ruined city of Verdun. Here we stayed until night when the horses came up and moved us on to a position on a hillside near Cote-de-Talou, better remembered as "on the canal." Captain Dempsey taken suddenly sick at Gallieni, Lieutenant Bradford was for two days in command of the battery and very ably put the battery in readiness to fire its first barrage. Here for two nights we carried ammunition to the guns, up a slippery hillside, until almost exhausted, when, on the morning of October 8th, starting at 5 o'clock, we opened up a seven-hour barrage. From the O. P. the B. C. detail men could see our barrage driving the Hun out and could see the doughboys go over the top and bring back prisoners. Here on the afternoon of October 9th, we saw three hundred Allied planes in formation, fly over the German lines and return.

On the evening of October the 9th, we moved out. Marching all night we went into position at daybreak along the main road, about a kilometer north of the ruined town, Brabant, this position being officially known as Brabant-sur-

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

Meuse. Here the batteries moved in under machine gun range and in plain view of the Germans we put our guns in position. Establishing a brigade echelon back on the canal about three kilometers the entire brigade settled down to a twenty days hammering process. The gun squads having their gun pits and trenches finished, started to work digging shelters for the crews. With Sergeant Rayburn at the echelon, Instrument Sergeant Simpson acting first sergeant at the guns, the necessary details were working all hours of the day and night carrying ammunition for Sergeant Riggs or rations for Mess Sergeant Gib Groscost. Along in the "wee" hours of the morning the gas horn would squawk out its warning and everyone slapped on their gas masks, Captain Dempsey sending for Gas Sergeant Bob Groscost to see what kind of gas Heiney was serving for breakfast this morning. There are many soldiers wearing the D. S. C., but in the words of Cook Liebler, "if they were given where they were deserved they would be as common among the cooks of the A. E. F. as are the Got Mit Uns buckles." (Cook Liebler having a gross lot of "buckles.") With the kitchen between us and the Boche, the cooks and K. P.'s braved the heavy shelling which was constantly going on in the valley and had the best meals possible out of the rations issued ready and on time every day. Crawling under the kitchen stove for protection while shrapnel balls and fragments of shells punctured three fourths of their cooking utensils, the cooks would pass it off with a laugh at Cook Dimett, shouting, "Zero, zero, 3500." Here in "death valley" the cook force suffered three casualties, Raymond E. Barnhardt, Albert T. Uhlenbrock and Alfred Koenig, and lost our first killed in action, Mascot "Spike," the dog. Any hour of the night you were likely to hear, "Section Chiefs report," and after the sergeants had been given the new barrage we were pulled out of bed and would feed H. E. shell to our gun until morning.

On the echelon we were grooming horses and burying many, worn out by our hard marches, making trips all over the country for ammunition and dodging of Fritz's "compliments," which he sent over at regular intervals. Trying to get enough to eat, taking baths in the river, grazing horses

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

on gassed grass and making trips to the guns with supplies, took up most of our time. We don't want to leave the impression with those at home that we had a cafeteria lunch room up here, but we could drop into Vinc Young's trench kitchen any hour up to 10 P. M. and get hot cakes, with butter and molasses, French or German fried potatoes, fried bread and coffee, FREE. All we needed to do was join the salvaging detail some day and help bring in the booty.

After spending three weeks in this position, going through such experiences as losing Phillips, who was killed while carrying ammunition to his gun during a heavy barrage, sending several wounded back to the hospital, and seeing "the ambulance," on the night of October 29th, at midnight, we pulled out. Going back through Brabant we marched all night, stopping at Glorieux at 6 o'clock for hot coffee, taking again the main road and following arrows marked "Rail Head," we were almost sure we were going to Bar-le-Duc as was the rumor. Winding our way around five miles of road we ended up in Camp Gallieni, which we had left one month before. After a good night's sleep we cleaned up and were issued some new clothing and rubber boots. Leaving at 6 in the evening of October 31st, we marched all night, going through Bois-de-Bethelainville and Bois-de-Montfaucon. Here we saw a woman giving a speech to a large mob of soldiers and also a column of prisoners being marched to the rear. We pulled into the woods about noon and had some trouble in parking our carriages without getting into a shell hole. Sergeant Groscost getting the kitchen smoking, we had slum in a couple of hours and then tried to rest for a while. Orders came to move at dusk, and we harnessed and were ready to go at 5 o'clock. The 324th, heavy guns, being in the lead and getting hub deep in mud, held up the column for many hours. We had supper while we were waiting and it being wet and cold proceeded to build a fire and to try to be comfortable. One fire going, in a short time dozens could be seen all over the woods. Some of us ventured off and found small dugouts where we could get in out of the rain and were fixed with places for fires. Patiently for a while, then impatiently, we waited in the rain until 1 o'clock in

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

the morning, when our line started moving and as was always the case "F" moved out without a hitch.

On the morning of November 3rd, we pulled into the Ferme de Madeleine, and camouflaging our guns as well as possible we stretched out on the ground to sleep. Word coming that we would stay here for a few days the carriages were parked and a picket line stretched. Our spare time was spent salvaging and sight seeing. Word coming some time about noon that we would move, we made rolls and packed them on the carriages. After standing through a drizzling rain all afternoon, we moved out at 6 o'clock without having eaten supper. Pulling down through the town of Cunel, we marched all night over a shell-torn road and being nearly exhausted we parked our carriages in a valley two kilometers southwest of Haraumont and rested for four hours. We moved on at 10 o'clock under the eyes of General Fleming, and here we saw some of the "fruits of our labors" of a few days past, when we were firing into this valley. Dead horses and Germans lined the road on either side for some distance. Passing many wounded on their way to the hospital, we arrived on top of a hill overlooking the town, Ecurey. Here we lay under shrapnel fire until 5 o'clock when we were ordered to go into a position at the outskirts of the town. Moving down the hillside in the face of a heavy German barrage we were halted at the edge of town, and waited for the Germans to lift their barrage from the spot where we later went into position. Laying the battery by the North Star the guns were in position and ready for a barrage at 8 o'clock that night. No order to fire came until 6 o'clock on the morning of November 11th, when we fired thirty-two rounds backing the 32nd division when the word of the armistice arrived with command "Cease fire." No one of us will ever forget the feelings we had that morning when we heard the war was over, heard the band playing and saw the Stars and Stripes pulled to the top of many buildings in this shell-wrecked town. After we had made sure that Heiney was not fooling us and that no more G. I.'s were coming over, we policed up our clothes, took baths and found

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

a house that had a roof over it to sleep in. After a six days' stay in Ecurey we started on our memorable "March to the Rhine" at 2 o'clock afternoon of November 16th, 1918.

Being a part of the advanced guard following the German army in their retreat, we were the first battery of artillery to pull into the town of Jametz. Horses and men sleeping together in some German aeroplane hangars, we rested until 4 o'clock next morning, when we resumed our march. Mounted M. P.'s and detachments of cavalry scoured the woods on either flank for "lingering Boche." We put up for the night in some more aeroplane hangars at Noers. Pulling out next morning, November 18th, at daybreak we marched all day arriving at Cosnes late in the afternoon where we were ordered to stay for two days. In history, this stop will be called a "Rest," but no one in this battery considered it such. We washed and oiled carriages and harness for an inspection, drew new clothes, turned in our rubber boots for salvage, just at the time when we needed them the worst, and such other details as the officers could find for us to do. Leaving here as a part of the main body of the advance, on the morning of November 20th, we entered Belgium. All towns were gaily decorated with the colors of the Allies and large arches with the words "Welcome Americans," "Welcome Our Allies," decorated the main streets. Arriving at the town Guerlange in the evening and finding that it was not large enough to billet the troops we pitched shelter-halves in a field above the town and camped for the night. Some struck out for themselves and found barns with full hay mows while most of us slept on the wet ground and woke up next morning covered with a heavy frost.

The next morning after having been given an enthusiastic welcome by all classes of people of Belgium, we marched into a small town in Luxembourg. White flags were flying from all public buildings and great was the contrast between welcomes. Only a few heads could be seen protruding from windows and no words of greetings were exchanged between Luxembourgers and soldiers. We reached Kopstal, which was an official stop, about 3 o'clock afternoon of November 21st, parking our carriages and stretching picket line in an

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

orchard on the hillside overlooking the town, we billeted in houses and barns and had supper about 8 o'clock. Next morning we pulled up a steep, slippery hill, some horses going down several times, and marched till the middle of the afternoon when we parked our carriages in a field at Imbringen. No time on our march did we ever have a full ration, but this time we came near having no ration. Lieutenant Holz took the old native wagon and went across country to a warehouse where he drew one hundred pounds of German flour, middlings, and brought it back for us to make into "flap-jacks." Whether it was because it was "Hun flour" or because it had been drafted into the American Army, we did not know, but after several hours of hard work next morning we were sure it would not make flap-jacks. With one spoonful of potatoes under our belt we started on toward Beidweiler.

Arriving at Beidweiler in the afternoon, we parked carriages and stretched picket line in a meadow field at the edge of the town. We billeted in barns and a school house and had the kitchen in the school house yard. This was the first stop of any length of time we had had with German-speaking people, and we found them to be very friendly and willing to share with us what little they had. Buying a hog for two-hundred dollars we had roast pork for our first Thanksgiving dinner on foreign soil and after a week of cleaning harness and carriages, in the rain, and innumerable inspections, we started for the German border. Pulling into an orchard, parking carriages and getting field kitchen to smoking we took our packs and went a couple of hundred yards down the road to a large barn, where the whole battery slept. Some of the boys went out to see what "Noah" had named the town, and found it to be Alsdorf, Germany. Here we could buy a small bag of lump sugar for five francs and some real German "schnapps."

Next morning, December 2nd, we started our day's march at 8 o'clock, but to the surprise of all we pulled into a field at the right of the road about 10 o'clock and unhitched and unharnessed. Again we cleaned harness and carriages and had an inspection. Going two kilometers down into the valley to a town called Messerich, we watered horses in a stream and stretched picket line just back of an old stone church. The

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

greater part of the battery was billeted in a large barn at the village "Gas House" and the kitchen was put into action directly across the street. A small amount of underwear and socks was issued by Sergeant Lenhoff, and Captain Scarborough gave the battery a foot inspection. Having been marching from daylight until dark every day, and many of the boys having blisters upon blisters on their feet, the doctor told them to bathe their feet five or six times a day in cold water, and never even smiled when he told them.

Bright and early next morning, December 3rd, we continued our march. Now some one of the high command had a change of heart and decided not to make us march all day without any dinner, so we were issued a can of Corned Willy to every five men and half a box of hard tack per man. We stopped at noon to feed the horses and eat our "issue" and then proceeded on to Ginsdorf. This place was considered large enough to shelter the whole regiment, so in a large pasture field at the far end of town, the regiment went into park. The first battalion on the left hand side of the road and the second battalion, two hundred yards further up and on the right hand side. Going through the usual cleaning proceedings the battery marched up to a German's barn and each man carried back an arm load of hay, Captain Dempsey having quite a time making the German understand that he would get paid for it "some day." Resting here over the 4th we had a chance to shave, police up and get a little rest. Morning of the fifth we started on what was the longest day's march we ever had. Marching until the moon was up, we came to a town where a band was playing; we thought surely this was our stop, but upon reaching it, found the 324th was there. Continuing on for eight kilometers we pulled off the main road into a town called Udersdorf, making a total of forty kilometers for that day. Tired and weary, we went down to the crossroads to a forage dump to draw feed for the horses only to find the ammunition train had the road blocked trying to find a place to stay for the night.

Next morning, December 6th, we pulled by the ammunition train and marched till after dark that night. The horses had become completely exhausted and our line was at extended

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

distances, when we pulled into Kelburg under the arch lights to the music of the 323rd band and under the eyes of Colonel Morse. Pulling through town and across a rudely constructed wooden bridge, we parked for the night in a swampy field. Going on the theory that had there been a guard in the Garden of Eden, Adam would not have stolen that apple, the ground floor of the only available building, a school house, was used for the guard house and several weary boys went forth to guard an empty kitchen and a bunch of horses, too tired to stand on their feet. About 10 o'clock, when the boys had just stretched out, about three deep all over the building, a sales commissary truck drove up with a load of Prince Albert chewing tobacco and sardines, and needless to say sleep was soon forgotten.

December the 7th we made a short march to a village which appeared to date from B. C. and which was called Boos. Arriving here at noon we ate our lunch and prepared for a "Bo Koo" inspection by General Fleming and Colonel Morse. Now the best soldier in the army will get tired of army grub occasionally, so our German-speaking members proceeded to arrange suppers of roast chicken, roast duck and fried rabbit with the German women for groups of men. The thoughts of chicken once again made us forget the cost and soon the Germans took us to be moneyed fools. Five dollars a plate was thought cheap for a piece of chicken, potatoes, apple sauce and milk.

Having had a day's rest, on the morning of the 9th we started for our first German city, Mayen. Reaching this stop about 3 P. M., we stretched picket line on one side of a main street and parked carriages on the other side. We billeted in a fine large apartment house which was so new it had not yet been occupied, and then we started out to see the sights. This town had street cars, electric street lights, jewelry stores and "everything." Next morning, much to our disappointment, we moved on and marching until mid-afternoon we halted in Krufft. Now by this time the rumors were flying thick and fast, about being in Coblenz by December 18th, and going back to the states, and our cry was now changed from "when do we eat?" to "when do we sail?" This was a three days stop,

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

supposedly to get our materiel ready to turn in, and much elbow grease was used on that old French harness to get it into good condition. Here we billeted in a theatre and had the kitchen just outside. Everything handy and everyone in good spirits, thinking we would be on our way home.

On the morning of December 13th, we left Krufft and we supposed we were going to Coblenz, but instead we were to miss the city of Coblenz and were to cross the Rhine between Coblenz and Neuweid. At 1:45 in the afternoon the battery crossed the Rhine, going over the large steel bridge built by Allied prisoners of war during the war.

Arriving at Heimbach at dusk we pulled through the town and parked carriages in a field on the right hand side of the road, putting the horses in an orchard on the left hand side of the road. Lest we should forget that we were still at war, it was necessary to stay out in the rain for two hours to exchange some ammunition with the first battalion. By the time we were ready to go in we were wringing wet and then had to sleep in barns or two deep on a kitchen floor.

Next morning December 14th, we moved out and thinking this to be our last march, we enjoyed the wonderful scenery in winding our way up the steep hills of the Western Wald. Reaching the village of Ruscheid at noon, we parked the carriages in a field, washed them, watered the horses in a small stream and tied them in a woods on top of the hill back of town. We were billeted in houses where it was warm and dry and the next day being Sunday we expected to get to rest once where it was comfortable; but Sunday morning, December 15th, orders came that we were to move out and let the 324th have the town, so we harnessed and hitched and moved over to Urbach-Uberdorf. Making our triumphal entry into this, a typical German "Dorf," about eleven o'clock on Sunday morning, December 15th, we took up a study of German Kultur which lasted until January 25, 1919. The whole village was out to get their first glimpse of an American soldier and as had been the case at all previous stops, we made a favorable impression.

Lieutenant Breese and Corporal Hage started out to find quarters for the battery, and to the surprise of all, we were

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

all billeted in houses with the Germans. The Germans were, of course, given their orders, and they were ordered to keep clean the rooms occupied by the American soldiers and not to stay in the room when soldiers were there. As would be the case in any country, under such conditions, the Germans were uncertain as to the treatment they would get at the hands of the Americans and so started in at once to treat us kindly and thus encourage good treatment in return. A mother's heart is the same, whether she be German or otherwise, and being treated courteously (for a true American knew nothing else) these German women soon started favoring us with hot waffles, apple cake and an every day invitation to "Coffee Drinking."

Getting settled in the place, we started to work trying to put meat on our horses' ribs by grooming them for hours every day. The horses were bivouacked in a pine woods about a kilometer back of the town and every morning *before breakfast* we hiked out there in the dark to feed them. After a *light* breakfast ourselves we would go back out, groom them, take them out for a couple of hours exercise, bring them back, water them and groom them then until dinner time. The afternoons were spent washing and cleaning harness and then came retreat, when a few more restrictions were made known to us.

Our slogan had been "Hell, Heaven or Hoboken by Christmas," and soon Christmas overtook us and 'twas neither Heaven nor Hoboken, so you know what it must have been to spend a Christmas over there. Lieutenant Bradford had wandered out hunting one morning and shot a deer, so of course we expected venison for Christmas dinner, but after one look at the deer, the captain ordered two veals so that each man could have a taste of fresh meat and not be disappointed. We woke up Christmas morning to find our first heavy snow, making it seem more like a real American Christmas. We spent the day wandering from house to house, looking at the different Christmas trees, gaily decorated, and hearing the German children sing Christmas Carols. The week passed quickly and New Years brought another holiday for us.

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

One morning we lined up our horses for a physical inspection by Doc Gohde and found that four of them had, not cooties, but glanders. They were killed, of course, and we were then put under quarantine, and no horse was allowed to leave or enter this area until we were ordered to move over to Dernbach on January 25th. Dernbach was a much better place in which to live. Our horses were all in barns and we were not nearly so crowded. We had a mess hall where we could eat our meals and be half-way comfortable; the cooks had an almost real kitchen where they had every modern inconvenience. Going back to the days of Lincoln, a fellow was sentenced to from one to three days splitting wood in the wood pile at the kitchen for any misconduct, and while no one in "F" Battery was ever guilty of such a thing, many were accused of it and punished accordingly.

Life was rather slow back here among the hills and the continual preparation for inspections by colonels and generals kept us from getting homesick, and also kept us from enjoying many of the privileges that had been well earned. Home talent minstrels and Vaudeville reached us occasionally and "Little Greer" at the piano gave us a taste of the latest songs from New York. The report was now afloat that we were going to sail soon; most every one accepted it as being the truth; even Captain Dempsey, who had moved to Paris after the occupation of Dernbach, heard the news and prepared to return to the boys in Germany, but when he learned the order was canceled he staid in Paris two weeks more, and we settled down to await developments.

In the meantime a few of the battery had a pass back to Paris and Aix-les-Bains, and the rest of us spent the time hoping for one. Finally the order came for us to move with the 32nd Division, and the amount of work to be done in the next few days looked almost impossible. But with the picture of home before us we could do anything and when on Tuesday, April 22, we lined up in front of the schoolhouse everything had been done as ordered, and just a little bit more.

Marching to the main road we loaded in trucks and were driven several miles to the train. Here we met again our old friends, the box cars, and spent almost four days and

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

nights in them, getting back to Brest. The trip was not so bad as we had expected. We had good eats, considering, and had a good time visiting among ourselves. We arrived at Brest, France, about one o'clock, the morning of April 26, unloaded, piled our packs in groups and lined up at a kitchen for supper. Some kitchen! everything moved like clockwork and before we had time to realize what was up we had our mess kits washed in good hot suds and lined up with our



Alberti Howarth Wagoner Chapman
Dobbin Elmer Hopper Rossi

"HOMMES 40"

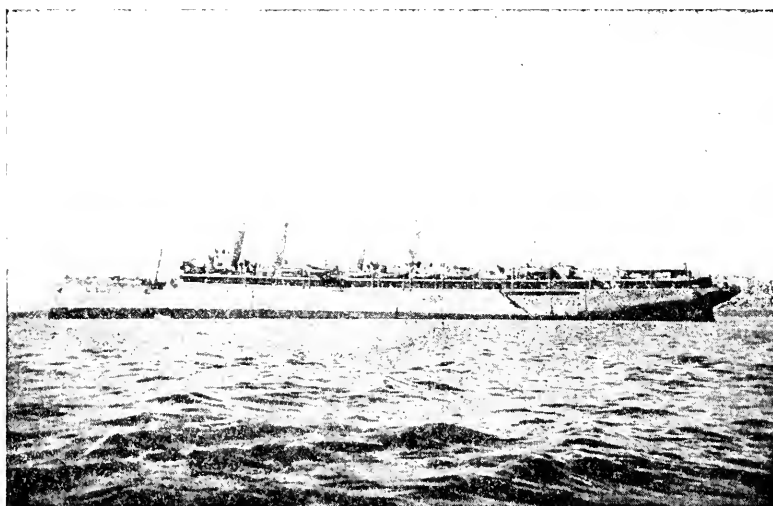
packs ready to march out to Camp Pontanezen. We can't say anything good of this Camp, so we will just merely mention it.

To show us how much they appreciated the boys who had gone through the front line and then held down a spot in Germany for months, they detailed us to crack stone in a quarry from 6 P. M. until 6 A. M., and men with rifles and bayonets stood guard over us to see that no one shirked. Well, we only had eight days of this and then we marched

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

down to the pier to load on some ship and start for God's country. Some fellow on the pier would step up and say "What outfit is this? I think I have a brother here somewhere," and when we would look at him and just smile he would say, "Oh! these guys are wise, some one has put them next." Loading us in a good sized ferry we slipped out of the dock to the Good Ship *Von Steuben* which we boarded about noon, and after being shown to our "state-rooms" we lined up for sauerkraut and wieners.

Now the "Vonnie" was a real ship and unlike the



U. S. S. VON STEUBEN

Agapenor there was room to move around without rocking the boat. We were scheduled to land in the United States in seven days so we lost no time in putting out to sea. Going at a good rate of speed, and while the water was smooth for the month of May, yet there was considerable motion to the ship and not a few of the boys started to feed the fish the first day out. We were issued overalls and could lie around on deck anywhere without thinking of our uniforms, and sleep to our heart's content. Much to the disappointment of some of our officers, no formations were allowed on the boat, so we were almost free to come and go as we pleased. Rather

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

a peculiar feeling to have, knowing that you are *still* in the *Army*! The choice men of the battery were chosen to do guard duty and thereby got to sleep in the center of the boat on the top sleeping deck, and eat with the crew. The soda fountain and ship's canteen gave us a chance to sharpen our appetites on some "nick-nacks" and also to get rid of a large portion of our savings.

Having sailed from Brest on the afternoon of May 5th we saw the lights from the city of Hoboken, N. J., about two o'clock in the morning on May 13, and dropping anchor we lay here until morning when the ship of Welcome came out and escorted us into the pier. Unloading about noon, we were served dinner by the Red Cross women at the pier, and then loaded on a ferry that took us up the East River to a place just back of Camp Merritt. Here we unloaded and with full pack we marched up the longest and steepest hill in New Jersey, and on into Camp about seven miles.

We were doomed for the delousing plant again and before any one could go to sleep, he with all his woolens must be sterilized. Now the war had changed the boundary lines in Europe, we knew, but not until we were issued cotton O. D.'s in place of our woolens did we know that Pennsylvania was *now* a southern state, but we were used to surprises by this time and as usual all we did was "moan" about it. After we had moved into another section of Camp, life seemed to hold more for us. We soon found the "Merritt Hall" and that is where many of our dollars rolled away. The 24-hour passes were handed out generously and many more dollars were put back into circulation in New York, New Jersey and Palisade Park.

Knowing that our battery was soon to break up, Captain Dempsey arranged to have a picture taken of the battery and each man to be given one. A banquet was prepared by our own cooks, who were faithful to the end with the help of some camp cooks, and at 7 o'clock one evening the whole battery sat down together to a chicken supper. This was the first time we had been seated all together in one room since the days of Camp Sherman, and needless to say we all appreciated it. After the supper was finished the officers and

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

several members of the battery made interesting speeches; some old favorite songs were sung, and we broke up to meet again some time, somewhere, in the future. That afternoon the battery had been divided up according to states, and the men were to be sent to Camps in their own states. Men of a certain state were put together in barracks, awaiting orders to move to that cherished spot where they should be discharged and set free once more. Many fond farewells were exchanged, and many good friends who had shared, share and share alike, parted and started out again for themselves, never to forget those who had been kind to them and who had unselfishly given their all that it might be easier for "the other fellow."

So, ended the life of a battery composed of as fine a set of boys that ever supported the Stars and Stripes, and who at all times worked hard and untiringly to accomplish that which they had set out to do. Having reached the goal and having done their duty, they went back into civil life better men because they had learned to do a thing and do it well, and to remember "the other fellow" while doing it.

McDONALD H. RIGGS,
Battery Historian.

Battery F At The Front

"I am actually in the land of military and romantic adventures and it only remains to be seen what will be my share in them."

THAT part of our trip to the front which was made by rail came to an unexpected end at 5 o'clock in the morning of September 23rd. At Coetquidan the camp commander had given definite hints that the trip would consume five days. Therefore we entrained with rations for that length of time, and all the harness was removed from the horses. Each battery had a train to itself. It consisted of fifteen flat cars, one passenger coach, and thirty-two box cars, which made a deliberate and motley appearance in its progress across France. Most of the box cars were occupied by the horses of which we had in the neighborhood of one hundred and thirty; twelve of them were occupied by the men who indicated their loss of pride by certain neighings and bellowings pertaining to cattle. That showed how green we were. It is certain that troops on their way *from* the front feel no humility by riding in "Hommes 40 Chevaux 8." It is hard to say whether an original destination of Italy or the Vosges was unexpectedly changed to the Verdun front on account of the impending offensive, or whether the indication of a long railroad journey was in conformation with a policy which had for its object the concealment of all troop movements and prospective operations in that sector. In either case the comfortable and settled feeling which we were enjoying on the train was disturbed early on the third morning. We stopped quietly at Revigny and for ten minutes it seemed as though the world, including our train, had gone sound asleep. Then Captain Herrick who had preceded the regiment by some days opened the door of Captain Dempsey's compartment and presented marching orders. A thousand questions might have been asked at that minute for Captain Herrick's few days of precedence at this mysterious place had made him not only a veteran but

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

one who had complete knowledge of what was about to befall us. To the few questions that were asked he returned answers that fairly bristled with significance, the upshot of which was that we had arrived in the zone of "hush-stuff", and that big things were afoot. The last conclusion was drawn from the fact that billets which had been selected for the regiment to occupy, while making a gradual approach to the firing line, had been given up and we were under orders to proceed with all haste by two night marches to a camp in Waly Woods, west of Verdun.

Detraining was begun at once. The platform was none too wide for one battery to straighten itself out on; and to increase the appearance of confusion a company of Engineers whose train had pulled in on the opposite side of the platform was unloading itself over most of the available space—they probably held a corresponding opinion of us. By eight o'clock, horses had been fed and watered and harnessed, men had breakfasted and all was ready. We filed across a bridge over a canal which was so glassy in the morning mist and lined with rows of trees so straight that no picture ever looked more peaceful. That thought received a severe jolt immediately. Revigny is a systematic and complete ruin, which was accomplished by air raids in the first year of the war. No debris lay in the street which was in perfect repair, but beginning at a definite place every house on both sides of the street was blown up in so similar a manner that the regularity of what was left was almost uncanny. The sight struck a new note on our green-horn susceptibilities. Mingled with a feeling of disgust and a momentary sensation of the uselessness of war it inspired a sort of elation, as though present in a moving picture drama. The sight was incontrovertible proof that our object was the bloody Western Front, a fact which had been scarcely realized during twelve months of training, first at Camp Sherman, Ohio, and then in the Brittany hills so far from the war itself.

We had the road almost to ourself that morning. We passed a train of twenty-five French auto trucks drawn up alongside the road. They were empty and the fact that they

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

were motionless now seems most extraordinary. The French usually kept their trucks on the "qui vive," going no one knows where. When we resumed the march our column was formed true to the best precepts of Volume Three F. A. D. R. The battery commander and reconnaissance officer rode at the head, then came the B. C. Detail in charge of the instrument sergeant. Only six members of the detail were mounted, the remaining twelve being on foot. Behind them came the firing battery with the cannoneers of each section following their respective carriages on "shank's mare," a necessary means of propelling the cannoneers when French materiel is used. Then came what the infinite wisdom of F. A. D. R. never took account of, the rolling kitchen; and, finally, three fourgons loaded with rations and forage constituted our battery supply train. The order of march of the first day is interesting to recall because it was the only time that Battery "F" marched as a separate unit at the front; all other times the unit has been everything from a battalion to a brigade, a condition never before realized in the American Army.

At Laheycourt we were duly impressed by the motor car of an American general, and wondered if they all stayed back that far. It was only four kilometers from Laheycourt to Villotte so at that point the reconnaissance officer with a small detail rode ahead to discover the woods which we had been instructed to occupy. They found batteries "D" and "E" with their "pup tents" pitched in an open field. Lieutenant-Colonel McKinlay who was then in command of the second battalion had preceded us, and he indicated with uncharacteristic recklessness that we would occupy the field, although a thick woods was close by. Woods are always a difficult place to navigate with carriages pulled by six-horse teams and it was a real relief to have a clear field for the battery when it arrived at the lot. That afternoon we had our first glimpse of German wasps. Two speedy ones flying at great height passed over us headed south. Later an officer of the first battalion which was detraining at Revigny during the afternoon reported that an alert was sounded when the Boche planes flew over the town, but no bombs were dropped. One other token from the front was

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

a camouflaged ambulance. It was all stuck about with boughs and green leaves which presented a grimly humorous spectacle as they flapped around over the crazy quilt pattern. The peace of a fine summer day was disturbed by no other sights or sounds from the battle tide which had receded many kilometers from Villotte, since the day when that town had marked the high water mark of the great drive on Verdun in 1916. We had no opportunity during the afternoon to see the town which was hidden from us by a little orchard; but when we filed through it after dark we had a sight of the jagged remains left by German artillery. Villotte is only one of the many thousand heaps of debris in France, and during the weeks which followed the battery passed through several score without being capable of a new sensation for each.

The second battalion comprising batteries "D", "E", "F" and battalion headquarters was now reunited after the railroad trip and was destined to remain intact to the end of the war. Marching orders arrived mysteriously from somewhere stating that we would have the use of the road at 8 o'clock for an all night march of twenty-five kilometers to Waly Woods. Everything was ready for the march by 7 o'clock and eager to get ahead of the game we started to pull out on the road which seemed deserted enough. This manœuvre quickly taught us the meaning of the phrase "the use of the road." The same unseen hand which guided our movements also guided those of other units, and we were gently but firmly jostled out of the way by a column of Engineers which cleared at exactly 8 o'clock.

The night was fine for marching; a full moon flooded the landscape, the air was just fresh enough to be exhilarating and to stimulate the senses already alert for any new impression. Hours of the night and kilometers of the road passed slowly but deliberately by. The absence of practically all other traffic was astonishing. Except for a few scattered truck trains and an ambulance or two we met no other troops all night. One mistep occurred. At the request of the battery commander, Colonel McKinlay had marked the road on the captain's road map. The colonel with the battalion

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

staff and a few wagons from the supply train was in the lead followed by the firing batteries in order of "F", "E" and "D". Some difficulty with shell holes and soft ground delayed Battery "F" kitchen and the following carriages in starting, so that it was not noticed that Colonel McKinlay with the leading elements had taken a sharp turn to the left, away from the prescribed road. No notice was given to the battery commander following and no marker was left at the cross-roads so that the principal part of the battalion kept straight ahead, a half hour lapsing before the officer in the lead discovered that the column had lost its guide. Up to that time we had proceeded without any lights, even smoking having been forbidden, but now a light was indispensable in order to consult the map. All anxiety was relieved when it was found that we were on the road indicated on the map. During the night an orderly reported that Colonel McKinlay, having discovered the loss of two and a half batteries, and correctly surmising that we had followed his orders, informed us that he with the balance of the battalion had taken a short cut and that we would meet him at the destination.

We came to a railroad crossing which was not shown on the French map, being one of the newly-built American roads leading to the front. Those fine railroads, equipped with Baldwin locomotives and American rolling stock are one of the most substantial memorials to America's effort in the war. The guard at the crossing informed us that General Pershing's car had just gone through, and made other remarks relative to a great traffic of artillery and tanks. This increased the feeling that operations were impending on some tremendous scale. During a halt we looked across the rolling fields and saw a train winding its way almost silently in the moonlight. Everybody in the column counted the cars. There were forty flats carrying forty black shapes which could be nothing else but tanks. It seemed like an army of little fates creeping in the night to overtake his imperial arch-fiend majesty, the Kaiser.

On a rise beyond the railroad there were a number of lights which appeared to mark the site of some peaceful

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

town. This cheerful contrast to the total absence of lights of every other description excited our curiosity. There was only one explanation for that bold display on a treeless hilltop, and that was verified at a road which led toward the lights where a lamp post was marked with the red letters "American Evacuation Hospital No. 9."

The night was nearly over when we reached Waly. A sharp turn to the right led down into dark woods. It was like turning off from the freshness and romance of the trip into a vale of grim reality. No sensation has a more potent effect on a person's thoughts than the sensation of smell. In this case it was a smell new in experience but old in the imagination, the flat, musty odor of the trenches. It emanated from a column of infantry which had been relieved but a few hours before and which was evidently on its way to rest billets in Waly. They passed us in column of twos, walking rather fast in broken formation, each man left to his own devices to get over the ground. Some of their number had canes, and a few others, bandages. They carried no rifles. These had been put into a wagon for transportation. The doughboys had packs on their backs and carried their steel helmets in their hands. Scarcely a remark passed; all their mental energy was relaxed or exhausted, leaving only a mechanical energy sufficient to hasten their steps. The incident made a really deep impression, first because of the smell, and then because of the silence of their passage. It did not seem right to refrain from words of greeting, but we have since learned that a matter of fact frame of mind given to accepting without emotion any situation which may arise is the usual and natural one at the front. It is interesting to think that those doughboys never returned to the monotony of "trench warfare," for the lines on the Verdun front were never stationary after that night.

We turned into the woods on a road of loose stone which at the time was the roughest in our experience; but it was a fine, smooth highway in contrast to the mud and shell holes of subsequent days. The officers took great pains to get the battery placed under the thickest branches, conducting each carriage personally to the spot it would occupy. The sections stretched their own picket lines where the horses would get

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

the best concealment. The horses had to have their rations of hay and oats but when that was done most of us chose to roll up in our blankets rather than wait ten minutes for the breakfast, which was nearly ready. Before going to sleep there might have been only one thought in some minds: Just how much of an explosion would ensue if a bomb should hit a hut filled with Italian machine gun ammunition that was located in our midst, and possibly some indistinct memory of a poem which started "O Waly, Waly!"

The Great Barrage of September 26, 1918

*"I do not fool myself to let imagination 'jade
me.'—Malvolio.*

AFTER a few hours of sleep we found ourselves wide awake listening to the intermittent sputter from machine guns. The noise proceeded from the edge of the woods only a couple of hundred yards away. Anybody who has been in a city where steel construction work is going on and has heard the trip hammers will find that machine gun firing sounds familiar, and further, that it inspires no feeling of danger. We never saw those guns but, without doubt, they were Frenchmen persuading Boche planes to fly high; it could have been nothing else except a wild Irishman practicing. A noon sun was shining down through the trees so as to make our cover seem highly inadequate. The woods were muddy and the trampled under brush was testimony to the many troops which had sought cover there before us. In fact, the strategic location of Waly Woods in a little ravine back of the Verdun front made it a gate way where in the past vast numbers of troops must have taken shelter and a last good rest. We could hear faintly and at great distance the reports of big guns, which were up there at the limit of our next night journey.

About three o'clock in the afternoon a messenger brought word that all officers would report at double time to Colonel Hennessy. This order came suddenly and calling for obedience on the run it was typical of all our actions during the next few days. The colonel was discovered with one foot resting on the motorcycle sidecar which had just brought him. He had a large sandwich in one hand and with the other he was motioning to outsiders to take themselves out of hearing. That motion was the physical expression of the "Go!" A word which belonged peculiarly to the colonel and which he used on every occasion as a means of bringing about sudden and unpremeditated action. It mattered not

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

what confusion might ensue nor how great was the thing to be undertaken; the word "Go!" would bring action and the result could take care of itself. We can recall exactly the tone he was accustomed to use. He would speak rather fast and bite off each word emphatically: "Now at the word 'go' you go and DO it" then after a pause: "Go!" high and sharp. It was easier than rubbing Aladdin's lamp. Colonel Hennessy is universally, almost officially, known as "Spike." A name which he wished on himself by the favorite expression: "They call me Spike, I nail them to the cross."

As soon as all the battalion officers were reported to be present the colonel caused them to gather close about him and began his speech. He had just come from army headquarters, with the latest information. All the guns were in place for what was hoped would be the final drive, the amount of artillery concentration in that part of the Argonne Forest which lay a few kilometers north of us was prodigious. There were guns of every caliber from naval pieces operated by sailors to "seventy-fives" placed almost wheel to wheel. The drive was scheduled to commence at five o'clock on the following morning under a barrage sixteen kilometers in depth. Our regiment had arrived just too late to take up a position for the barrage, but Colonel Hennessy stated that the 323rd was the luckiest artillery regiment in the army on account of the distinguished mission which had been assigned to it. As soon as darkness should come on we would move forward into the battle line, and take up a position of readiness. When the German line had been broken our battalion would push through into open warfare. The colonel urged that every precaution be taken to insure the proper working of gas masks inasmuch as our position of readiness would be within a hundred yards of a French battery and we could expect counter-battery fire. Even more impressive was the colonel's admonition that those persons who kept their heads stood a good chance of surviving. He added the further information that Lieutenant-Colonel McKinlay had been promoted to the rank of full colonel and that he hoped as a result of the battle he would succeed him in the command of our regiment. The officers were not quite sure whether he was talking of becoming a

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

casualty or a general, and they were still more perplexed when he turned to a lieutenant who smiled out loud and said: "I don't mean what you mean." As it happened the prophesy of being succeeded came true but in an unforeseen manner.

It is often a source of reflection on the part of soldiers in training to try to foresee what state of mind they will find themselves in and to what sensations they will be a prey when about to enter battle. Usually such reflections end in acknowledged failure, the question must be settled by circumstances themselves. It was being settled for us during the two hours of preparation which followed the colonel's speech. The deepest emotions had been aroused, and the fact that our part in the battle was to be so small as scarcely to count could not be foreseen and did not enter into our calculations for playing a big part. Feelings, in general, partook of two elements, one similar to stage fright and the other a sort of elation at being actually present in a great adventure. It all resulted from the dramatic circumstances of the colonel's speech, and the promise of activity. Waiting would have been a harder virtue so it was just as the colonel said, we were a lucky regiment.

We pulled out of Waly Woods at 7 o'clock and formed a battalion column in order of batteries "D", "E", and "F." In the town of Waly we turned north on the main road and headed in the direction of distant flashes which resembled little imitations of heat lightning. For a few hundred yards we were reminded of the peaceful march of the night before, but a total contrast was in store for us. The column had not fairly cleared Waly when it came to a halt. Some machine gun companies which had bivouacked in the woods beside the road suddenly decided to take the road and in the opposite direction to ourselves. They were having an awful time getting straightened out. There was much shouting on the part of officers and men to locate units. The following conversation which was bellowed through the darkness may be recalled. Captain X up ahead: "Major Y, Oh, Major Y, what company has gone first?" Major Y far behind, "What?" Captain X "What company has gone

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

first?" Major Y finally understood the question and bellowed "B." Captain X misunderstood the answer and questioned at the top of his lungs "E?" The rest of the conversation was drowned out by swearing on the part of Sergeant Z who was half-way between the disputants. At length the machine gun battalion and a period of time passed and we moved forward a few hundred yards only to halt again. This time the wait seemed interminable and if that was to be a criterion of the rate of our progress daylight would find us several miles from the goal. It would be hard on the colonel and his wrecked ambitions. He had gone ahead to the lines and in the morning would be waiting for the crucial moment when he would turn to his regiment and say "Go!" Alas, if the regiment were not at hand to react to that abridged field order!

Meanwhile the traffic on the left of the road increased and its mobility decreased in inverse proportion. It consisted chiefly of motor trucks headed in both directions. Beside the dark hulks of those huge trucks our carriages looked insignificant and the horses puny. We were forced to pull so far to the side in order to avoid locking wheels with our giant neighbors that the pieces and caissons came precariously near to slipping off and burying themselves in mud which flanked the solid roadbed. But the horses were prevented from such a mishap by pushing against a still lesser part of the traffic, namely, some burrows and donkey wagons which had pulled off to give the artillery the right of way. Finally even the left side of the road had to give it up, and with a few worthless jerks the big trucks came to a standstill. When traffic is at a standstill the usual course is simply to wait patiently for the head of the column to find its way out. Truck drivers sit quietly on their seats and let the motor purr gently until offered a chance to grind its teeth and follow again in column. Artillery drivers are accustomed to dismount and stamp cold feet or perhaps catch a nap while the horses heads droop and the column waits. There is something philosophical in traffic that cannot budge but must wait patiently through long hours for the spirit to move it.

That night the congestion was different from the usual.

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

In the first place it was heterogeneous; there were the trucks of two nations, touring cars belonging to French and American colonels, motorcycles of supply officers, burrows with engineers tools and a whole battalion of artillery, horses and materiel. In the second place, according to "Spike," the greatest barrage of the war would commence in two hours; trucks *had* to get through with ammunition and artillery *must* move ahead. The worst feature was that the trucks and motor cars had nosed their way into our column which was to have been kept closed up at all costs. Probably at that moment battery "D" was many kilometers ahead leaving the rest of us not only engulfed and stalled but without a guide. It was just a dovetailed jam and the ability of the head of the column to move freely offered no solution. Each officer exerted the most strenuous efforts to disentangle that part of the congestion in which he found himself. He gave orders in French, swore in English, coined new words, insulted colonels and worked up a big perspiration. Gradually the French trucks were shuffled so as to rescue a few yards of road for one carriage at a time "Allez! a gauche, restez—vous,"—a voice from the driver's seat replied "What in Hell do you want?" We "carried on" that way for about an hour, fighting the battle for freedom. When at length the knot was untied traffic disappeared in a remarkable manner. It melted completely away and for the rest of the night we had the road practically to ourselves.

Before we reached Froidos an officer from regimental headquarters rode back along the line and imparted the information that our road had been under heavy shell fire only a few hours before. We thought what exceedingly hard luck it would be after so much training for the battery to be shot-up before it had fired a gun. A cannoneer was appointed to go to the head of each off horse in case of trouble. The march continued undisturbed through Froidos to Anzeville. The country was rolling and we seemed to be elevated above the battle line which was momentarily growing nearer. As we got deeper into the salient the flashes of the guns flared up on three sides of us. They were still too far away to be heard except during a halt, when the deep

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

intermittent sounds of explosions reached us distinctly. Every now and then a star rocket would shoot up and then float slowly away casting a weird light on our column; the luster in its immediate vicinity must have been intense. Another rocket which attracted our attention consisted of three stars continually shot into the air in rapid succession followed by three more. That signal went up from the same point in the horizon at regular five minute intervals throughout the night. We wondered why it did not invite an enemy shell on a point the location of which was so repeatedly betrayed.

In Anzeville there was a ten minute halt. A high moon illuminated the white and jagged ruins of a large church. This was the town which had been shelled during the afternoon, not because it was possible to inflict any more damage on what had long since become only a pile of stones and plaster, but because the Germans had left a remnant of the church tower on which to range when "strafing" the important road that ran beneath. Stopping in a spot so ill-chosen was the subject for considerable dry humor, exceedingly dry. Afterwards the delay was attributed to a short debate at the head of the column on the choice of roads. Clermont lay deeper in the valley to our left; it was reported to be full of gas and the regiment had been warned to that effect. The question was whether we should climb a steep grade on an unimproved road which continued straight north, or follow a highway around the hill to the right. It was decided in favor of the direct road. After a hard pull with the cannoneers working at the wheels we found ourselves on a broad hilltop, treeless and desolate in the moonlight. The elevation commanded a view of all the surrounding country, and at the moment we reached the top of the hill that country woke up and roared from every quarter. We had climbed the obstacle which had intervened during the preceeding hours and rendered faint and distant the sights and sounds of battle. Moreover, we had gained the summit at exactly one o'clock in the morning, the hour at which the barrage of September 26th commenced. The transformation from travelers who looked on at a safe distance to combatants who found themselves actually

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

present in the offensive was sudden and complete. A barrage, like Niagara Falls, cannot be described, although the parallel ends with that expression. Contrary to popular ideas the noise of a barrage is not a continuous and unbroken roar. It is a succession of irregular explosions emanating from the guns in the immediate vicinity. Sometimes these explosions occur together, or roll in rapid succession, this is followed by a few seconds of comparative silence broken only by isolated reports and followed by fresh burst of fire. From a distance the noise is more continuous when the sound of each gun blends itself with every other gun in one grand roar. Unless one is standing within a few yards of a piece there is no shock in a big gun barrage, but the roar transcends every sound and sense. The great vibrations are rendered less annoying by the law of opposing forces; the air is torn apart in so many different directions at once that big vibrations are broken by other big vibrations and the result is a confusion not unpleasant.

Indeed there was one feature of that barrage which approached, in a sense, pleasantness. But this feature was not discovered until after we had recovered from our initial wonder at so great a thing, and found ourselves halted and exposed in the brilliant flashes of the guns. One of the first sounds was a moan and then a noise as if somebody had dropped a heavy load of lumber several hundred yards away to the left. It was the only enemy shell we heard come over that night. It took some time to realize the fact that the show was all one-sided, which was the pleasant feature. Nevertheless, during that strange bombardment the element of suspense was always present, because we did not know until afterwards that what the high command had hoped to accomplish in a few hours had been accomplished almost immediately, namely, the complete smothering of the German artillery.

The situations on the hilltop was hardly a grandstand seat from which to watch the caged lion roar without a

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

thought of danger. There was food for thought in several of the precepts of Volume Three. "A battery seen is a battery lost." "Artillery is extremely vulnerable in the open when limbered." We were on the wrong road and should have kept in the valley; all the German artillery within range had observation on our hill. Colonel McKinlay who was commanding the column ordered us to turn around immediately. Although barbed wire entanglements and shell holes and trenches were on every hand the turn might have been successfully accomplished in the combined radiance of the moon and the barrage. At that moment Colonel Hennessy arrived on the scene and quickly canceled the order to turn around. And in the face of remonstrance on the part of the liaison officer "Spike" assumed full responsibility for pushing on. He ordered the caissons ahead to an ammunition dump (we had come that far without a single round) and the firing batteries to wait further instructions. The road down which the caissons disappeared lead straight into a spot where every few seconds a flame of fire darted up followed by an explosion. Some of us who waited on the hill had serious misgivings for our friends with the caissons, our ears were not yet accustomed to discriminate between giving and receiving. We did not see the caissons again for twelve hours. Conversation on the hill was scant although a few who stood close together attempted to bawl a few scraps of language into each others ears. A good many strenuous hours had passed since the hot supper in Waly Woods and we had inside information to that effect.

At length the battalion resumed its march in the track of the caissons and when we descended the hill it was no small measure of relief to find that the road-crossing was not shell torn, but that two big American howitzers were in full blast there. We picked up the highway again and turning west marched for a kilometer under a cliff so steep that it rendered that part of the road safe from enemy fire. A full gauge railroad ran along on the left, and at the moment when the attention of the drivers was diverted a tremendous crash

almost blew them out of the saddles. One might have expected to see the horses become unmanageable but either the noise was too great for horse-sense to comprehend or the beasts were too terrified even to shy. Blasted wits having been collected we preceived six huge railroad guns arranged in groups of twos, one of which had fired directly over us. When we approached the farthest gun a man had the grace to shout in pure Yankee "Hurry up she's going to fire," and then for the first time since the drill field the command was given "trot—march!"

At the first chance beyond the cliff we turned north again on a small one-way road, and mounted up into open country that bristled with howitzers. Those batteries were hidden in clumps of bushes or on the edge of an orchard, and some finding no natural concealment had set up a flimsy screen of camouflage which was thrown aside for the action. After perhaps one kilometer more signs of life, other than the great machinery, appeared. A number of troops gathered beside the road and a pile of scattered ammunition boxes marked a dump. It was there that we turned off the road to the right and started down a hill full of shell craters. The two colonels shouted contradictory directions to us and eventually the battery was parked in a field without the slightest semblance of order. It was after five o'clock. The din was terrific, but a heavy mist shut off everything except the sharp yellow flashes that cut it in quick succession. The flashes, however, were becoming less brilliant in the overwhelming daylight. Just back of the field on a wooded hillside was a battery of French "155 Longs" in full blast. There is no gun, unless it be a ten-inch railroad rifle, which makes a more ear splitting crack than a "155 Long"; but nevertheless the grove immediately surrounding that battery was the place designated for our picket line. The poor horses nearly went crazy that morning until they went deaf.

A good chance was now afforded for drawing a long breath, and for ruminating on the amazing absence of enemy fire. We cast about for something to eat, and, after bellowing into each others ears whether it should be beans or tomatoes we decided on both with "willy" to boot, and when we got

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

through there was nothing to eat and nothing to wash except hands. The sun was up and thinned the mist taking the chill out of it. Some of us lay down in the grass and for the space of an hour lost all consciousness of the fact that the greatest barrage in history was engaged not only in making the world safe for democracy but also a pitted battlefield safe for sleeping.

The Argonne

*"When the blast of war blows in our ears."—
King Henry V.*

FOR nine hours on the morning of September 26th the hills and valleys of the Argonne belched out their fire and hurled a frenzy of righteous indignation against the German strong points around Montfaucon. The overwhelming nature of the barrage was not fairly realized until five weeks later when we returned to the sector and crossed the waste land which had once been the proud Kriemhilde Stellung. We had a grandstand ticket on the 26th, a day which turned out so clear as to disprove the theory that a big cannonading brings rain. Toward noon most of the neighboring batteries became silent, and only a few scattered guns kept up a desultory firing during the rest of the day. Out in front of us was a little rise of ground, and a hundred meters beyond that, the higher wooded ridge from which the assault had been launched. We had no idea of what was taking place out there, the absence of enemy shelling was more a mystery than anything else. Many aeroplanes flew back and forth over our heads but at a height too great to distinguish whether they bore a circle or a cross. Frequently a plane was pursued by little puffs of white smoke which appeared many seconds before the faint "pom, pom, pom" of the bursting shrapnel could be heard. The hell which the anti-aircraft artillery projected toward heaven seemed miniature and harmless in comparison to that on earth. Bombardments of the sky were a commonplace sight for us after that day; but we seldom saw or heard of a plane brought down by the "archies" whose principal function was to keep the enemy observers flying high. Even while we exalted in the Allied supremacy of the air, for presumably the Hun planes were outnumbered, two incidents occurred which proved that the foe still existed. French observation balloons had risen, one pair of them some distance to the rear and another pair on our left. Suddenly we looked to see only a curtain of black smoke where one of the rear balloons had

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

been and away from that smoke there floated a speck of a parachute containing the pilot. At the same moment the thing was repeated to the left, only this time there was no sign of the pilot making his escape. The two balloons which survived looked ridiculously lonely with their companions puffed out like candles. The act was so concerted and so swiftly done in a quiet blue sky that it seemed like a dream. It was later reported that the Huns who did the trick had slipped in by virtue of small high-powered machines, the wings of which bore the red, white and blue circle of the Allies.

About 2 o'clock in the afternoon orders were received to move ahead. It was a much easier proposition to navigate among the craters of the field in daylight than it had been in the uncertain lights of the early morning. After half an hour the road was reached and we pulled along it for several hundred yards to the foot of the wooded ridge. A battalion of "75's" had just pulled out and abandoned for our use its hastily prepared position about one hundred meters from the edge of the Bois de Hesse. This was our first gun position. It was evident that no fire could be delivered from there. We were the only light batteries in the vicinity and moreover it was rumored that an advance of seven kilometers had been made that day, a situation which justified the boldness with which we had taken up the position in broad daylight. Even Colonel McKinlay admitted that it was a reserve position and that we were laid in preparation for counter attack. The battery detail tried to orient themselves and point the guns on "Y" north. To do this it was necessary to set the compass goniometer directly in front and within a few yards of a pair of six-inch American rifles in action. The tremendous concussion was very disturbing to the accuracy of the first laying, but fortunately we never fired from that position.

Meanwhile a long gray line of German prisoners passed by: there must have been more than three hundred. The sight was cheery, for it was a tangible proof of what had been accomplished by the great efforts we had witnessed. We regarded those prisoners with curiosity and looked for signs of the poor conditions of food and clothing which were reported to exist in the German army. But their appearance was hardly

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

wretched. They were well shod with black leather boots, and their clothing was in good condition. Most of them had thrown away their heavy steel helmets and wore the familiar round cloth cap with a button on the front. A few had received wounds, but only one was carried on a stretcher by his companions. Their faces were white, which was natural considering the hell from which these devils had been pulled, and, while some were expressionless, others were smiling and looked altogether satisfied with the situation.

Late in the afternoon the caissons turned up from somewhere and unloaded a pile of shells at each gun, after which they joined the limbers and horses which had taken shelter in a corner of the woods to the left. Telephone lines were stretched from our position to the battalion observation post (O.P.) which occupied a knoll behind us and from which nothing could have been observed except the close defense of the guns. The most profitable work was performed by the cannoneers, who improved the depth of the short and narrow trenches which were found at the position. When everything had been set in readiness to open fire on any target which might be designated in the direction of "Y" north we found that the first excitement of approaching the front was giving place to great drowsiness. All the men, except a squad at each gun, were sent over to the picket line in the woods.

We made up lost sleep at double time that night, and the next morning felt only a vague recollection that the ground had been shaking periodically for some hours. Daylight and a consciousness of the real nature of the stunning explosions around us dawned *pari passu*. The night before the crashing of the long guns across the road had been a most satisfying disturbance, a sort of "give 'em hell" sensation, but those guns were silent now and had lowered their long noses into the bushes. Fifty yards to the right, the road, which passed back of our position, swung north and disappeared into the woods. It was at that turn of the road that the battery of heavies had been operating, and now the spot was the center of dispersion for the German shells that were coming over. The shells were of large calibre, and, judging by the low pitch of the whine which preceded the arrival of each, they

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

were firing at extreme range. The long whine was followed by a swish and then a geyser of dirt, bushes, smoke and flame followed immediately by a sharp crash. There was a second or two for ducking before the hot metal fragments reached us, and after it was all over and we had started to listen for the next contribution, a few stones and sticks that had traveled high, came pattering down. Big shells are always a demoralizing experience, there is too much time to think when you hear them coming. Between the moan and the crash a man can review his past life, can speculate on how small an amount of deviation from the last shot would be necessary to jar the gun in his direction and can realize that no power on earth is now able to alter in the slightest degree the course of the projectile which is at that instant—almost—kerflop CRASH!!! The ground a few yards off is torn to shreds, now that one is over with, where is the next going to land? and so it goes over and over again. That morning the shells kept fairly constant at the bend in the road, with now and then a "short" plumping down into the woods just in front of us. The guards on our guns stated that the show had been going on most of the night, although doubtless an hour of this new experience could prolong itself indefinitely on the feelings. Corporal Deveny picked up a piece of hot metal which stung his foot, and fumbling it from hand to hand, said: "If ever I get back to Beaver County I sure would like to have this to show the folks." But we guess he thought his chances were so slim that the splinter wasn't worth keeping. The bombardment kept up for nearly an hour after daylight and then suddenly ceased. None of the heavy guns at the bend in the road had been struck, and the enemy had thrown over a bunch of expensive ammunition to no account.

The battalion commander turned up about 7 o'clock and without any hint of our destination we took the road which led north into the Bois de Hesse, penetrating the eastern reaches of the Argonne forest. For the first kilometer there was no interruption. On every hand were signs of the drive which had been so recently organized in those woods. A board nailed to a tree marked the "regulating station" where troops and vehicles which approached the front line trenches before the drive, had

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

been inspected. There were signs announcing the "gas alert zone," and numerous "dressing stations." All these things were rendered obsolete by the magnificent successes of the last few hours. We turned to the right on a narrow, unimproved road, and thereupon progress became slow. We halted several hours until the head of the column could nose a way through the congestion at some cross roads. The fine weather overhead was no reflection of the mud underfoot. The halt on that narrow road recalls to mind what a mire it was, because during the long delays there was no dry spot to sit down on. No matter how bright the sun it had little effect on the eternal mud that was churned up by heavy traffic. The road ran along the reverse slope of a ridge where the big trees had either been shot down or cut down to build dug-outs so that what was left was only a tangle of underbrush and saplings not at all characteristic of the straight, clean forests of peaceful France. It made excellent concealment for guns and the bushes on the left of the road were "lousy" with big artillery. On the right the hill fell away sharply and the road was lined with barbed wire as a reminder to keep in the track and not to disturb the appearance of the bushes on the hillside lest the gun positions be betrayed to enemy aviators—a sample of camouflage discipline. The batteries represented every sort of heavy piece from six-inch rifles and howitzers to twelve-inch naval guns manned by French sailors. The numbers of French and American artillerymen were about equal, although all the infantry in the sector was American.

While the secrets of the Argonne forest were thus disclosing themselves it was an interesting speculation how so many unwieldy pieces of machinery could have been brought up that narrow muddy road and concealed in position without the knowledge of a shrewd enemy. To bring up one such gun in broad daylight would have been an accomplishment in itself.

The middle of the afternoon we emerged from the eastern edge of the woods, picked up a hard road and swung north on a high barren ridge. There suddenly unfolded a panorama of the battle field, the most conspicuous of which was a commanding hill that could be seen to the north across six kilometers of lowlands. The white ruins of a city on the

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

hill shone conspicuously in the rays of the setting sun. Ignorant of our geographical whereabouts we guessed that the town might be Verdun, but in reality it was our first glimpse of Montfaucon, which was at that moment being captured by the Americans. West of the town the intervening lowland ascended gradually, covered by the shattered remnants of the Bois de Montfaucon which had concealed most of the opposing German artillery. To the east the country rolled up into the hills which overlooked the Meuse River.

Any reflections which might have been indulged in, concerning the battle that stretched out before us, were cut short by the voice of Colonel Hennessy. He stood in the middle of the road and, having taken complete charge of the traffic, was giving rapid orders to everybody in sight. Perchance he had uttered the magic "Go!" but the traffic would not go and it was necessary to "do something quick" in accordance with his policy. He was saying, "Captain, turn off here. Only the four guns will go ahead on this road (indicating a muddy lane). Give me an officer." The officer was instructed to allow no vehicle except those of the 323rd to enter that field. Our caissons and supply wagons were turned off but it was evident enough that no other vehicles in all the vicinity had the slightest desire to follow our example and park themselves on a bare hilltop in full view of all the hostile world. The guns pushed laboriously through mud that was rough and treacherous with shell holes. The lane descended along the back of the ridge so that the further they went the better became the defilade. About five hundred meters beyond our famous, or rather infamous, echelon we met Colonel McKinlay, who indicated the battalion position on the reverse slope below the right of the road. The location was an excellent one with good defilade, a broad field of fire, and dugouts which afforded maximum protection by virtue of the covering slope of the hill. It was a place which had evidently been used for several years by batteries of "75's", and it had only that day been quitted by an American battalion which had moved forward into the Bois de Montfaucon. Our caissons had been left back at the echelon but we appropriated several piles of abandoned shrapnel and shell. One thing was missing which in most positions would have been

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

highly desirable. There was not a tree or a bush on the entire ridge, but camouflage was easy under the principle of multiplying that which cannot be concealed. The hillside had been a scene of action for so long that it was mottled with dugouts, shell craters, and emplacements, and the overturned earth at our position was only a part of the general aspect. The books dictate that camouflage nets be spread over each piece in order to conceal the outline of the gun, but here the result was to create little green patches which were more conspicuous than the bare emplacements. The fact did not alter the determination of Colonel McKinlay to "hide" his guns by spreading over them the flags of chicken-wire and raffia. The most strict camouflage discipline for escaping discovery at the hands of enemy aviators and subsequent destruction was maintained. The men were not allowed to smoke or have lights of any kind after dark, nor were they permitted to dry clothes in the open. All that in the face of an echelon where the band played, and which stuck up on a bare hilltop like a sore thumb, and of a battery of six-inch guns which was operating without a vestige of concealment only two hundred yards away. The battle was anything but practice out in front where Fritz was being kept so busy that he had neither time nor ammunition for troops in reserve.

The country in which we found ourselves was perhaps as desolate as any on the Eastern Front. The remains of the town of Esnes lay half a kilometer further down the road, and beyond were the first heights of the Verdun defences of which our own ridge was a bloody outpost. The German onslaught against Verdun in 1916 had seethed around Esnes, just to the west of which was the famous Dead Man's Hill. A French officer pointed the place out to us and repeated the consecrated expression "*On ne passe pas.*" The ground about was so pitted with shell holes that there was scarcely a square foot unscarred by the blast of high-explosive. The shell holes were for the most part nearly two years old, but their sides were still lined with upturned gravel in defiance of nature's attempts to cover her disfigurement with grass. When the farmers return to cultivate those hillsides they will find no lack of barbed wire for their fences. Indeed, it will be a

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

marvel if they ever reclaim the ground from under the fearful tangles. In front of our position there were two parallel barriers of wire which ran the length of the ridge and which had been built with great care. Each barrier was about thirty feet wide of heavy wire with long barbs placed so close that it could not be handled. The tangle stood about three feet high and was supported by hundreds of iron and wooden stakes. The distance between the two entanglements was sufficient to prevent a bursting shell from tearing the wire in more than one barrier at a time. A little valley behind us was fortified in the same way as far as the eye could see.

The position was held by us for six days against all attempts to dislodge us. The attempts were those of our own command who would gladly have moved any artillery forward that could get through the congestion on the roads. It has lately been reported that the position which should have been occupied at that time was north instead of west of Esnes, but the blockade on the roads made it necessary for Colonel Hennessey to put us where he did. Our light guns were out of range with common shell and, since no semisteel was available, not a shot was fired by the regiment on the west side of the Meuse. Everybody was anxious to perform some service to justify our presence on the scene of action and an opportunity was afforded to carry ammunition to the batteries which were engaged in the Bois de Montfaucon to the northwest. Every morning before daylight we could hear the barrages which sounded as though somebody had set off a bunch of giant fire-crackers. Every night therefore an expedition of caissons was sent out from the regiment in order to get as many precious rounds as possible through to the guns which could use them. The expeditions were usually away for twenty-four hours, and required the greatest exertions on the part of the men and horses. On the second night of our stay the caissons of battery "F" struggled through in care of Lieutenant Breese, Sergeant Crawford, and Sergeant Riggs. On their return they reported that the assistance had arrived in the nick of time, and that our ammunition had been put to immediate use. Reports were current that the Infantry which had swept over the intervening lowland and captured Montfaucon so rapidly

A History of Battery F 523d Field Artillery

were hard pressed by lack of artillery support. But whatever the difficulties which were experienced it was evident that the Germans were kept so busy that they did not have time to molest the long helpless lines of traffic which stretched from Esnes to the battle line. Hostile artillery was not silent. Every day we could see the white puffs of shrapnel bursting over the ruins of Montfaucon, and could hear the dull plunk, plunk of big shells which were constantly landing in the woods around the base of the prominence. On the nights of October 1st and 2nd the enemy threw a few "G. I. cans" further back, but by that time the opportunity had passed for wrecking the traffic, and the shells had no more effect than to upheave a few fresh craters on the forward slope of our ridge.

When the guns had been put in their emplacements we had time to consider the food problem. There had been no issue of rations to the regiment since we entrained for the front, and nothing to indicate that the subject was being given a thought. The truth was that our supply company was lost in the Argonne Woods and Colonel Hennessy could not find it. To feast on the fruits of victory is a grand thing, but unsubstantial when the canned "willy" is gone. Having had no refreshment during the all day march through the Bois de Hesse it was decided to pool what still remained of the reserve rations and to make a final and equal distribution for immediate consumption. That decision eliminated all envy of another's lot. The following morning Colonel Hennessy solved the predicament in true "Spike" style. A runner from regimental headquarters brought an order which summoned a detail from the battery to report to the echelon on the run. The colonel was engaged in conversation with an infantry major, and beside them was a ration dump which contained "bokoo" fresh beef, canned vegetables, a large pile of bread loaves, and forage for the horses into the bargain.

A colonel who had the foresight and a supply company which had the ability to collect such provisions in that place certainly deserved to have their names blest. But charitable thoughts were prevented from starting at home by the intelligence that the rations belonged to an infantry regiment on the firing line. However "Spike" had determined to help him-

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

self. Any fears which the infantry major entertained concerning his rations were dispelled by the assurances of our colonel that everything taken would be replaced, and moreover that the food would spoil before it could ever reach the "doughboys." But whatever the intention, no return was ever made. The meat did not spoil. A detail of harpies from each organization was on hand and the distribution which ensued was completely satisfactory from a mess-sergeant's viewpoint. One of the articles of booty was a barrel which stood by itself and had not attracted much attention. Colonel Hennessy said: "There is a barrel of watermelons—GO!" Restraint in the presence of the colonel was thrown aside at such an invitation, and in the scramble which ensued the barrel was demolished and some of the eggplant which it contained was secured in good condition.

An incident of an altogether different nature marked the foraging expedition. Just to the left of Montfaucon there was an observation balloon which attracted our attention on account of the boldness of its forward position. Suddenly two little parachutes left the basket and floated away, for a few seconds it was a mystery why the balloon had been abandoned, it hung there as lazy and natural as ever. Then without warning the giant bag became a mass of flames and crashed to the ground leaving only the black column of smoke. Although this was the third balloon whose destruction we had witnessed there was no doubt that the Allies held the air supremacy in that sector. No balloons were ever visible behind the enemy's lines. On a fair day Allied planes could be seen in all directions, and the appearance of a "boche" was always heralded by machine guns which rattled over the whole landscape from Montfaucon to the Bois de Hesse. Several thrilling fights were staged right over our heads, but the swift machines darted about at so great a height that it was impossible to distinguish friend from foe. The evening before we left the position a Hun plane flew low over our heads, it was pursued by two French machines which poured a stream of lead all around the luckless Boche. The course of each bullet could easily be followed by the bright light which the tracer ammunition emitted. Fritz ducked

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

and swerved, and although outnumbered, he showed considerable pluck and ability so that the battle disappeared over the hill behind us before any fatal decision.

The appearance of the ground around our gun position with its myriad shell holes and barbed wire entanglements gave an impression so desolate that we had a feeling of being alone in the vicinity. This impression was speedily dispelled by a ten minute walk to Esnes. The town was so completely demolished that it could hardly be called a ruin. Stone and plaster lay in heaps that had lost all outline of the houses that they had once been; only here and there a jagged corner or a door-sill remained standing, while the church was marked by only a corner of its tower with a remnant of roof clinging to it. A number of big guns had taken up positions in the erstwhile parlors and shops. They were painted a dusty gray to conform with the color of the debris, and that was accomplished so successfully that one was startled to discover a gun. The main road which ran through Esnes was a spectacle. French and American three-ton trucks and ammunition quads occupied most of the road, with "flivvers," caterpillar tractors, and smoothly running ambulances sandwiched in between. Whenever the traffic halted men on foot and mounted officers appeared unexpectedly from its midst and continued their way along the sides of the road. Just above the town there was an important four corners which acted as a sort of safety valve for the relief of congestion out in front and at which the traffic that came from three directions was controlled. A captain was usually on duty there as traffic cop and his favorite occupation was to steer the heterogeneous stream around a huge ten-inch gun which had turned too sharply and become stalled, forming an effective and seemingly permanent dam.

But there was little opportunity for being away from the guns. An hour after arrival the position was organized for defense. Telephone communication was installed which connected each of the batteries and battalion headquarters through a central with a line run beyond the echelon into a hollow in the edge of the woods where regimental headquarters were located. A barrage was figured from battle maps on a scale of one to twenty-thousand, and the guns layed accordingly.

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

It is an invariable rule that batteries layed on a barrage shall mount a guard on each piece day and night. It is such sentinel's duty to fire his gun instantly if he receives the command "barrage!" That guard duty was no hardship at Esnes since the gun squad had little else to do; but if a guard had taken it upon himself to fire his gun not even our own infantry would have been hit—they were too far ahead. On the second night a curious thing happened which showed how disorganized communications had become by the rapid advances of our men. From the valley out in front came a hue and cry "artillery is firing short!" It was relayed from the vicinity of Montfaucon and caught up by every man who heard it, resounding from near and far. A good deal of cannonading had been going on from the heavies in the Bois de Hesse and the cry was evidently meant for their ears. We strained lung power collectively and individually in attempts to pass back the word. Sergeant Nord got out a flashlight and projected it by the Morse code. But whether the improvised communication was effective or the big guns ceased firing in their natural course will never be known.

Compared to the strenuous nights which followed, these were exceedingly restful but they were not without disturbance which chiefly took the form of gas-alarms. Most everybody has a healthy respect for gas, and we had come to the front with a solemn resolve to use our masks with the greatest possible celerity should the occasion arise. It was wise to act first and reason afterwards whenever the gas alarm sounded. The common or garden variety of alarm was a claxon horn operated by hand or compressed air, the improvised variety was an empty shell case suspended by a wire and struck with a monkey wrench. The latter was the kind which our sentinels employed vigorously on several midnight occasions in the fresh clear air of Esnes Hills. The commotion always originated on a claxon in the vicinity of Montfaucon, the alarm was caught up on the alert throughout the valley, and passed back as far as our own shell cases. The whole neighborhood resounded with a noise of claxon horns and beaten brass, augmented by the discharge of pistols which added to the general effect. Down in the dugouts we were mindful that gas being heavier

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

than air seeks low levels. So after poking a neighbor in the ribs to make sure that he was awake, there was nothing to do but adjust the mask and await developments. The battalion gas officer then passed along the battery positions and tested the atmosphere by a good sniff here and there. If the coast was clear he would announce "You have permission to remove face pieces," whereupon each soldier took a local sniff and acted accordingly. Such a performance took place on several nights until it was decided that the sentinels should call the gas officer before repeating the alarm.

The echelon also was not without its excitement. One night the men were startled by the clear blast of "call to arms." They crawled out from their various shelters. Their pup tents were pulled down, the blanket rolls made in the drenching downpour, and the batteries were formed without delay in order if necessary to defend the echelon. Colonel Hennessy had taken up sleeping quarters in a fourgon, and it so happened that a storm coming up suddenly drove the rain in upon him. The services of the command were therefore most urgently required to turn the fourgon around. Incidentally a detail was sent to put out a fire smouldering in an underground dugout.

Verdun

*"Three sleepless nights I passed in sounding
on a dim and perilous way."—The Borderers.*

ON THE afternoon of October third, Colonel Hennessy assembled the battery commanders and imparted the information that we were a part of "the greatest single movement of troops." That cryptic remark held vast possibilities, one of which was a drive on Metz. There had been considerable talk of an American offensive in that sector, but, until the colonel's remark, we had been planning to go forward instead of back. It had been the official intention for us to abandon our guns and take over those of a battalion supporting the 33rd Division in the Bois de Montfaucon. Both colonels of our regiment had made a reconnaissance with that end in view and returned with the cheerful news that the battalion we were about to relieve had lost its major and most of its personnel by direct fire from the Germans. From all reports it was not an enviable inheritance and one easily forgotten when we got the unexpected order to move back.

Daylight assisted in the making of rolls and getting the guns out of their emplacements, but it was dark by the time the regiment assembled at the echelon. At that time Major Fibich, recently assigned to the regiment, issued his first order as our new battalion commander. It was to stretch the picket line, pitch tents and get what rest we could since the powers that be had indicated that our march would probably be delayed until the next day. When the tents were pitched we proceeded to crawl between our blankets and accompanied the settling-down process with grunts of the most complete satisfaction. Such a piece of mind as is customarily enjoyed by a bug in a rug lasted for us about three minutes, when the voice of some luckless orderly from battalion headquarters cried into our semi-consciousness. We would prepare to take the road immediately. There were no two ways about it. The first sergeant blew his whistle, and the little canvas sleeping apartments disappeared like a happy dream

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

and were rolled up and put back on the gun carriages. In half an hour we stood in the field with the column formed. An hour more and still we stood waiting for the first battalion to move out ahead but it had taken root on the road. The hilltop was comparatively still with the rumbling of gun fire a long way off. Once our airplane whirled back and forth over our heads. The air was growing chilly and the drivers leaned against the leeward flank of their horses wondering in a dull way if that airplane would drop any bombs. At length we mounted, kicked the horses back into consciousness, and moved away in ignorance of our destination. We traveled back through the Bois de Hesse over an excellent road with many turns. To all appearances we were alone in the woods and for several hours progress was so rapid that it was only by leaving markers at the turns that we could feel sure that the whole battalion was following. As Colonel McKinlay put it, the carriages were strung out "from here to hell and gone." It was therefore with some measure of relief that we cleared the woods and found that a halt had been called. The carriages in rear which had been racing along by themselves were able to close up on those in front. Fifteen minutes and the feeling of relief passed, but the "rest" had just begun.

The night was clear but a sharp wind swept the exposed hillside where we were halted. There was nothing to do but stamp around briskly and make a few weak remarks about some searchlights that were sweeping back and forth across the sky toward the east. But as time passed the wind cut deeper and the whole column congealed into immobility. Some of us sat down on a pile of crushed stone by the roadside and although not aware of being asleep lost all consciousness immediately. This was disturbed by the sound of a motorcycle coming down the hill; that stirred a vague sensation of a foot being in the road and a dumb wondering if it was possible to muster the energy to withdraw that foot before the motorcycle would get there and cut it off. More fortunate were the several men who had perched themselves on the spigots of the water-cart. The horses looked as though they were going to drop in their traces, and let

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

their heads droop lower and lower. How long we waited in that condition is a question, it must have been several hours before the column moved again. Then we pressed forward by jerks and halts. Presently we came to a cross-roads. The explanation of the long delay was evident. The 322nd F. A. and the 323d had met at the road junction, their startings having been badly timed. Colonel Warfield, being senior, had the right of way, but after a time Spike had become impatient and sandwiched our batteries into the column as opportunity offered. There are few impressions of the remainder of that night. The drivers and the cannoneers took turns at walking due to the cold. When a man had mounted his horse with great effort he saw nothing, except the horse's head bobbing monotonously up and down, and sometimes the drivers fell asleep in their saddles. In Recicourt we turned east and followed a fine national road through Blercourt where daylight was turning the night mist to gray. No matter how weary a person may be during the night, daylight usually revives the spirits. We were passing through a long valley flanked by steep ridges. The air resounded with an early morning barrage from heavy guns located along the ridge on our left. It was the most western of the great Verdun forts in action. At a point where the valley widened a fork of the road swung back toward the south. There were two big signs, one marked "VERDUN" with an arrow straight ahead, and the other "BAR-LE-DUC." Under the arrow of the latter we swung sharply to the right and thought that the die was cast for the Metz front. The theory, however, was permanently banished when, after one kilometer, we turned to the left up a long grade into Gallieni woods. The name recalls a picture of the most trying "rest camp" and stickiest mud hole in France.

For four years those extensive woods in the middle of the active Verdun salient had sheltered rest billets and echelons for the French army. The shacks were rife with "galloping dandruff" and the stables full of filth. Outside under the trees the ground was torn up into treacherous bogs of mud. Into these woods whose dreary appearance was anything but cheerful we pulled laboriously about ten o'clock in the morning. The horses had been in draft during four-

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

teen continuous hours without water or eats, and if they could have spoken their minds would probably have said to the cannoneers "you and me both." After tending to the needs of the horses the battery was soon sprawled out around the bases of the trees where the ground was firm over the roots and less muddy.

Our ideas of Gallieni Woods would be very different if we remembered it by the several hours of undisturbed sleep which were enjoyed while the sun was shining at high noon. But the "rest camp" had just the opposite experience in store for us. Everybody aroused themselves early in the afternoon and steered a determined course toward the rolling kitchen where beef, tomatoes, and coffee had put in a happy appearance.

The difficulties which would be met if it became necessary to harness and pull out of the mud in the dark were evident enough, and so the captain proposed to get all ready while the daylight lasted. Rolls were made and strapped on the carriages; the horses were harnessed and the whole battery turned around with the leading carriage on the edge of the road. If "Spike" had only come along then and said "Go!" we would have gone. There was no hint of what to expect, and so we waited. An hour after darkness had come on the command was ordered to unhitch and turn in for the night. That wasn't bad news, it was easy to change our intentions from a hike to a rest. Battalion headquarters were perplexed and admitted that orders to move might still come. A fine drenching rain had set in and the night was pitch black. The men inserted themselves between the blankets with a few gay remarks which implied "Now let them try to rout us out."

That challenge was answered immediately. A voice was heard from the direction of Battery "D" calling for all batteries to prepare to move. The colonel had returned in an impatient mood, and, although the night was already half spent, he was ordered to put his regiment into a firing position before daylight. A trying struggle ensued. Practically everybody was sick and some men had been carried in the fourgons on the night before; the battalion surgeon was busy

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

dolling out quantities of camphor and opium. A mitigating feature of the situation was that the firing batteries alone were called for which meant only the guns with a caisson for each and one fourgon with the orienting instruments. Extra cannoneers and drivers who were not called upon to tear up their tents helped get the firing battery ready. Under the circumstances morale was at a low ebb, but everybody turned out and did his share of the black work. Time passed until by the combined senses of hearing, feeling, and swearing the battery was made ready and the drivers of the leading carriage roused their horses into action. The gun lurched forward a few feet, then plunged down over the axles in mud where it stopped so utterly as if to say "You may all go off and leave me I refuse to stir again." Nobody thought of aeroplanes then, everybody thought of a light; that gun must be forced out and on. Somebody produced a flashlight and with its help four more horses were added to the six already on the gun. The cannoneers wallowed in the mud braced themselves at the wheels, and turned the trick. When the column at length found itself on the road we felt as though we had done some of the hardest fighting of the war. It was a kind of fighting seldom considered except by the men who have been in it, no shells had screamed into the woods, but the most trying of all.

The route was the same by which we had entered, but we were not "out of the woods" until the main road was reached. Several horses in the battery preferred to lie down and die and the slippery condition of the wet clay road assisted them in that decision. Every time a horse went down the whole column behind had to come to a halt while the carriages in front slid off into the darkness and disappeared, but neither traces nor legs of drivers were broken, so that such delays were only a matter of a few minutes. On the Bar-le-Duc road we turned to the right toward Verdun. A French truck train was plunging along at great speed so that it was a miracle that none of our gun wheels were clipped off, as each truck driver seemed determined to contribute his share in trimming the artillery, and when that didn't succeed they jammed themselves into a blockade that stopped

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

everything for a while. When traffic finally got started again it moved at the rate of two hours per mile, but neither the night or its difficulties could last forever. The fetters fell away during the last hour of darkness and we had a clear level road leading straight into Verdun. The approach of dawn brought the usual heavy mist, we could see little of the surrounding country, but it was evident that our march lay through a deep and narrow valley. The highway was flanked by rows of tall trees, and parallel to it ran a double-track railroad; it was the main approach to Verdun from the west. Some huge howitzers and their tractors were drawn up beside the road, but our column was the only sign of life. The forts on the surrounding ridges were silent, and the impressions which the early morning mist afforded were those of an approach to a peaceful city. Although no railroad trains passed, the railroad was in operation, protected by the covering crests, and its red and green lights were a cheerful and an unusual sight.

It was indeed true that we were too far from our positions on the battle line to be able to reach them before broad daylight should catch us on the road. The absolute secrecy of American troop movements in that sector was imperative. We crossed the railroad, and found ourselves on a city pavement under some fine overspreading trees of a little park which bordered an exceedingly wide deep moat. Crossing the moat by a stone bridge we passed through a gate in the great wall of the city, and came to a halt in another little park just inside the gate, and like the American who visited Paris exclaimed "So this is Verdun!" The teams were unhitched, and sent back over the long straight road to our echelon in Gallieni Woods. Great pains were then taken to push the carriages among the park bushes and under the thickest trees. The place had one attraction which surpassed all others, it offered a prospect for breakfast and a much needed sleep. The three hours rest at noon on the previous day counted for nothing in the face of the forty-eight hours of exertion just ended. Most of the battery took full advantage of its opportunities for a rest, but the instrument detail in command of Lieutenant Bradford who was acting

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

battery commander was enjoined by the Colonel to go out immediately and make a reconnaissance of our proposed position. Major Fibich assembled the reconnaissance parties of his battalion and they filed out of the gate in a mood which was not hilarious but at least resigned to banish all thought both of rest and nourishment. The advance party on that morning followed the same route which the firing battery took to reach its position the following night. A fork of the road swung north at the grade crossing, it was possible to see only a few hundred yards through the mist which still persisted. The substantial suburb of Thierville constituted the northwestern outskirts of the city where the houses were built in solid blocks with handsome facades. The town however was nothing but an empty skeleton of its former self. Shells had torn gaping holes in the walls and roofs and wrecked the interiors from which not one house had escaped. There was one group of large buildings enclosed within a high iron fence; it resembled a fine military barracks but the map explained that it was a large girls' school called the Jardin-Fontaine. A few French poilus were straggling toward Verdun, and three or four mounted French officers, but the atmosphere of the place was lonely and deserted. The impression was exactly the one which our command desired to create in that sector. The front north of Verdun had been held by the French and for many months it had been inactive. Both sides, settled into what they considered impregnable positions, were content to apologize for their presence by the exchange of a few shells at regular hours each day. Now that the enemy was so busily engaged in the Argonne Forest it was desired to spring a surprise in the height on the east bank of the Meuse, the American Army was taking over the sector so quietly that even we could hardly realize the fact. It was in Thierville that the party stopped at a rolling kitchen to beg some hot coffee, so greatly desired and badly needed. None had eaten for nearly twenty-four hours and there was no food in prospect. As the coffee was being served by the good-natured cook, Colonel Hennessy appeared in his Dodge car. "What the hell are you doing here? Pour that coffee in the road and go," was the greeting

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

to Major Fibich. Military discipline does not permit the retort courteous and the party did as it was ordered.

Beyond Thierville the road crossed flat and open country, but the shell holes which covered the fields and the little patches of crushed stone where the road had been repaired showed that the vicinity was a favorite target for artillery. When the ruins of Charny showed up in the fog there was a sharp turn to the left, and a sign at the corner announced in French that the road was for light traffic only and all vehicles must proceed at intervals of fifty meters. The enemy was prepared to shell the road if he saw his targets, but in the mist it would have been easy to bring the batteries up in daylight without anyone being the wiser. For several miles the road was camouflaged by saplings, branches, and long grass loosely woven into a screen twenty feet high. The screen was torn in a number of places and corresponding to each tear was a newly-made shell hole in the road. It was easy to see through such a screen when close to it but at a little distance its transparency helped to blend it with the surrounding fields; the idea was not to conceal the presence of the road, the location of which must have been accurately known by the enemy, but to obstruct observation of what took place along the road. Where the fields became marsh-land and the road a viaduct there was a wooden bridge over a little river and beyond that a similar bridge over a canal which was almost as large as the river itself. Such was the unpretentious appearance of the Meuse on which the whole world had its eyes. Beyond the canal rose the steep and barren ridge of the Cote-de-Talou. It was a commanding barrier north of Verdun, and a strong point for artillery on the line of the canal. A boat-landing on the canal at the foot of the ridge was a unique sight, there was a small group of poilus with their little round packs and canteens already to go away on a "permission." Presently a barge propelled by a gasoline engine came along filled with other "permissionaires" who had been picked up enroute; the men who were waiting crowded in and they all started off on a vacation. The great ridge which rose out of the canal protected the excursion boats from direct observation, but it

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

did not prevent big shells from crashing into the water every day, several shell-craters looked very fresh and showed why the bridge was made of new lumber. The road ran diagonally up the hill behind a number of old emplacements, shacks, and dugouts. Somebody spotted a "cantine militaire" in one of the shacks, a very dirty little hole, where an old soldier served sugarless hot chocolate in rusty tin cans and where a piece of bread and butter was obtainable for a few coppers. The humble appointments of the restaurant did not prevent its being the acme of good cheer, and a "sine qua non" for the reconnaissance party.

The French battalion which we were to relieve was located at the western end of an irregular line of emplacements along the upper half of the ridge, the slope was so steep that low-angled guns had to be placed well up in order to clear the crest. The dugouts in the line of the guns were small and only designed to shelter battery personnel from flying splinters but about half way down the slope to the canal the French had built protection from the heaviest kind of shelling. Long flights of steps descended thirty feet into the ground where narrow dugouts resembled a mine shaft. There were double tiers of shelves for bunks, and a hole in the wall that led into a room with tables, chairs, and a stove. These compartments were lined with heavy timbers six to eight inches in diameter which supported the roofs and walls so as to prevent a cave-in from shocks overhead; and to complete the security there were at least three exits to every dugout so that a single shell could not seal up the occupants by bursting at the top of the steps. One dugout, somewhat grander than the others, had a concrete entrance, which the regimental adjutant had labeled with a paper and pencil "Hennessy P. C." That was the last time that Colonel Hennessy's name played an official part with our regiment, for the colonel never saw his headquarters on the Cote-de-Talou. He was relieved of command that afternoon, October 5th, and for the next four weeks we were under the conscientious direction of Colonel McKinlay.

Fortunately for the tired limbs which the reconnaissance party dragged around, the work was made comparatively

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

simple by the courtesy of the Frenchmen. They offered maps, services, and information, not excepting dinner. But these Americans they have money, they have food, they have everything—yes, but that day they were damn hungry. “Les troupes” were more than generous with their boiled potatoes and their wine, a sour red variety which went by the name “Vin de cantine.” One difficulty was that we were bringing up a regiment to replace a battalion, twenty-four guns were trying to move into twelve emplacements. In the assignment of areas only one French emplacement fell to the lot of battery “F,” and when the battery arrived at midnight three gun crews had to dig themselves in during the remaining hours of darkness. Half of the French guns had been removed the previous night and the other half were left layed on the defensive barrage until ours arrived, when they were withdrawn and all the French artillery disappeared from the Cote-de-Talou. When a careful inspection of the routes of approach had been made the reconnaissance was considered complete and the instrument detail settled itself for a few hours of “shut-eye.” That was interrupted by a swish and a sizzle which sounded directly overhead. It brought the French out of their dugouts like a lot of prairie-dogs, one of them remarked simply “loin,” and everybody looked on calmly while geysers of dirt were thrown up a couple of hundred yards to the west. They told us that it was a most usual occurrence, every afternoon at 4 o’clock the boche was in the habit of throwing over a fixed number of shells always in the same spot. Nobody was ever disturbed or injured, but everybody enjoyed an opportunity of getting out of the dugouts for an airing. According to custom also there was a shelling of the bridge at the canal at eleven o’clock every night. That intelligence was disquieting with the regiment expecting to come up at precisely that hour, but when the time came our guns had already gained the hill and in the anxiety to get them placed it was not noticed whether or not the ceremony of the bridge was performed.

October 6th was a quiet day on the Cote de Talou, and a good one for aerial observation. Since it was essential to conceal the presence of American artillery we were ordered

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

to keep ourselves and paraphernalia carefully under the camouflaged nets. But those instructions were not long in force, the tactical situation demanded that we prepare for the big attack. The first three days were by no means idle ones. A battalion O. P. was established on the crest of the hill about three hundred yards in front of the guns; it was reached by a path which started from the eastern end of the regiment and wound up through barbed wire and a con-



TODE DIMETT

fusing tangle of muddy trenches. Over such a path it took several trips in daylight to be able to find the way at night. The idea of approaching through the trenches was to avoid showing a head above the sky line on which the enemy had direct observation. At first the O. P. was nothing but an especially muddy place in a trench but the battery sent out a daily detail of men to excavate the sides of the trench and cover the excavation with iron rails and plates which were

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

easily salvaged in the vicinity, the result was protection from the weather at least. A good view of the German lines was had from there, but without reference to a map it would have been impossible to distinguish what hills were held by the Germans and what by the Allies. Away to the left front stretched the valley of the Meuse River beyond which the Argonne offensive was in full swing. In the distance several balloons could be seen and we judged them to be the same ones which we had seen before near Montfaucon. On the near side of the river the enemy held all of the opposing slopes, where no signs of life were visible although the lines of trenches and a few roads were easy to distinguish on the face of the bare hills. From a deep valley the ground rolled up higher and higher and in the background were dominating heights, densely wooded, which was the region of the Bois de Grande Montagne. The strategic location of the Cote de Talou had made it a target for the heaviest artillery which the Germans had brought to the assault on Verdun, the ground showed every trace of that hard usage, but it is possible that some of the craters had been made by the guns of Fort Douaumont or other of the powerful forts in the rear. Inasmuch as the Germans had stormed and taken the ridge in 1916, and the Meuse canal at that point was described by the press as running with blood and choked with bodies.

The horses and limbers which had brought the guns into position had been sent back to a wooded hillside between the Cote de Talou and Verdun. We therefore had two echelons, since the baggage wagons, kitchens, and extra caissons had been left back in Gallieni Woods. For the first day or two the wolf was at the door of the batteries on the hill, until one kitchen per battalion was brought up under cover of darkness and placed in a shelter along the line of deep dug-outs. So-called hot coffee was the principle output from that kitchen and the most appreciated. Corporal Moorehouse was reminded of a can of salmon, alias "goldfish," which he had brought with him the first day and concealed under a prominent stone, but alas, it was never found again, and is probably to this day lying under one of the many prominent stones on the Cote. If fare was light conversely the work was

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

heavy, an unfortunate combination, but as Sergeant Gib said: "I could carry ammunition day and night if I knew that each shell was going across." And we did carry ammunition day and night, with a lingering memory of how the caissons had been loaded under distressing conditions at Esnes, only to have the shells straightway unloaded and left in the mud. The French had abandoned a number of shrapnel and gas shells for our use, but in the drive for which we were preparing it was necessary to use common shell and semi-steel. This ammunition was brought up in trucks at night, but the trucks could not leave the road on account of the mud and shell holes, and therefore had to unload at the eastern limit of the regimental area. Then began the weary trips back and forth in the dark, when a rain rendered the clay path so slippery that it was a stunt to navigate only a few steps without going head over heels. The real trouble, however, was empty stomachs. With a hot plate of chow, the job could have been done in half the time.

On the third day the distant echelon in Gallieni was moved up and combined with the horse line five kilometers to our rear. About eight o'clock in the evening written instructions were surreptitiously received to the effect that the drive would be launched at H hour the following morning. The officers met Major Fibich in one of the deep dugouts and held a council of war which would have done justice to any cinema picture where candles, maps, cigar smoke, and a crowded room compose the scene. No conversation on the subject was permitted over the phones on account of the German listening-in service; neither were we notified of the exact time for the drive until shortly before the hour which was quietly passed around as being 5:30 A. M. The line of the attack and the limits of the front on which our guns would operate were passed down from the infantry, and time-tables were turned over to the gunners, which would enable them to drop shells in front of our infantry increasing the range when the infantry advanced, and standing pat when the infantry rested. We had been on the front long enough to learn what hard work was, and to see something of bloodshed and destruction, but now at last we had an opportunity to

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

put into practice the very thing for which the battery had come into existence. We worked all night oiling the guns and ammunition, and carrying up every round of additional ammunition which arrived on the hill, as well as quantities of grease and other supplies brought up from the echelon in all haste. At 4 o'clock the guns were checked for parallelism by means of lights no brighter than the ash on a cigar—the laying was accurate. At 5 o'clock the seconds were counted over the telephone and the watches of the chiefs of sections synchronized.

The guns of the Verdun forts led off, their watches must have been five minutes ahead of ours. They were followed by the heavy artillery of the 324th which was below us and to the left; and H hour struck when Sergeant Beligoy's piece boomed forth putting out the candles and spattering down the dirt in our little dugouts. The entire regiment was in full operation, and the noise and flashing compared to that on our first night in the Argonne. On every hilltop the forts roared, and down in the valley across the Meuse some American railroad artillery was in full blast; on the Cote de Talou the sharp cracking of the French fortress guns sounded high above the artillery of our own brigade. Up at the O. P. there was assembled a group of instrument and telephone operators and observers. It was still too early for observation, so the instruments were set up and directed on the stakes and strands of barbed wire a few feet in front. Swarms of shells from our own guns screamed close overhead, the whiz of the shell and the report of the gun arrived at the same time, and down in the depths of the trench it sounded like a shot-gun fired close at hand. The slow swish, swish of the heavies and the sharp hissing of the "seventy-fives" were easily distinguished. The doughboys of the 29th Division went over the top at half-past five but it was still too dark to observe their movements, and the time was only marked by momentary lull in the barrage when the gunners were increasing their range. Suddenly a new note struck into the sound of battle. It was a moan at first faint but increasing faster than a person can think and splashed over the O. P. into a crescendo explosion just behind. The

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

wonder was that the enemy had withheld its fire so long. The shells seemed to be landing among the batteries of the first battalion, but they were coming over only one at a time which made it a very one-sided duel, but withal an uncomfortable one since the boche knew the exact location of the emplacements on the Cote de Talou while for us his guns were anywhere in the dim and distant hills. About six o'clock the observers picked up with their glasses the faint outline of the crest along which our shells were bursting, but their goose was nearly cooked when a huge shell crashed into the parado of the trench covering the O. P. with dirt and stones. When another sent up a geyser from the trenches a few yards to the right it looked as though the enemy had their bracket, and the instrument detail began to look for a hole in the ground. After an hour of that game the enemy shelling ceased altogether.

With daylight the mist cleared away and disclosed a view of the entire operations. Small groups of infantry in squads and platoons were advancing up a steep bare slope. The ground was broken by craters and barbed wire, but the advancing parties picked their way without hesitation. Sometimes a number were observed running together at one spot which was probably the mouth of a dugout choked with Huns. Now and then when a shell from German light artillery exploded the puff of smoke was seen between the groups of men, but enemy resistance was comparatively desultory. The fire of our barrage was easily observed as it burst along the opposite crest, and the attack progressed so perfectly that the picture seemed almost unreal. The barrage rested half an hour on the crest and then stepped forward and disappeared from view. The left elements of the infantry were the first to gain the summit, but they were observed to fall back quickly, probably having run into a machine gun nest, or ventured too near to the protecting barrage. The ridge was approached from the right and enfiladed, for a few moments the men completely disappeared taking breath in the shelter of some trench and shell holes, then the squad reappeared as if by magic and gaining the crest, they passed over it. The creeping barrage could be followed with watches

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

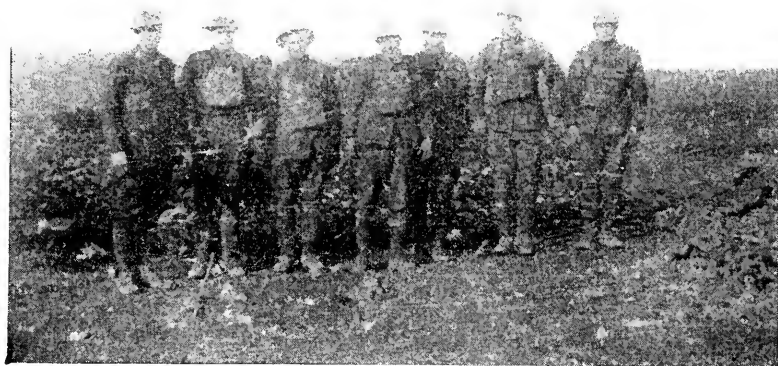
and a map until it re-appeared at greatly increased range just below the edge of the woods that crowned the high hills in the distance; one more step, and nothing could be observed except smoke rising from the trees. Then the gunners started on the semi-steel ammunition and the rushing shells changed their pitch to a high shrill whine. Our fire slowed up on account of a scarcity of shells of the long range variety, and in the breathing spell it was a relief to find that the regiment had suffered almost nothing from the counter bombardment. The enemy's range had been accurate, but all the shells landed between the fortress guns and our right battery, one man in Battery "A" was slightly wounded by flying stone and that was all.

During the rest of the day long lines of prisoners filed back over the ridge. They bore eloquent witness not only to the success of the operation but to the demoralization of the German alliance. They were all Austrians and presented a sharp contrast to the Prussian captives which we had seen on the west bank of the Meuse. Clad in rags and undernourished these Austrians were nothing but filthy, emaciated, and ignorant creatures from whom all ambition had long since fled. The fact that the German command was content to leave the defense of that sector to such troops showed how complete was the surprise with which the operation had been launched. The strategic importance of the movement was not so much to gain control of the almost impregnable hills north of Verdun but to cause the Germans to withdraw troops from the west for the defense of these hills so vital to their cause. Developments of the month which followed accomplished this purpose with unmitigated success.

Brabant Sur Meuse

"Feats of Broil and Battle."—Othello.

OCTOBER 8th was a red letter day for the 323rd. It had launched the barrage of its first enterprise in such a manner that the 29th Division achieved all its objectives. The infantry commanders bestowed no end of praise on the accuracy and affects of our barrage. But the work had only commenced.



Staub Wright Foster Norak Dawkins McCalligan Caldwell

BRABANT HILL

The regiment was informed that it could expect to move forward immediately, but that order was amended so that the first battalion went forward on the afternoon of the eighth and the second battalion one day later. We therefore set to work to clean guns and assemble ammunition. The prospect was good for a quiet night, and the making up of lost sleep was an even more attractive thought

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

than a square meal. The battery was layed on the line of a defensive barrage which covered not only our own sector but that of the first battalion as well. Then, everybody realized their ambition for sleep except a detail of telephone men and observers who were sent out from each battery to the O. P. to be on the lookout for signal rockets calling for the defensive barrage. There were too many observers out there to be accommodated in the O. P., and the men swarmed and swore in the trench and on the parapet. Fifty yards away the heavy artillery had established an O. P. for a similar purpose. It was manned by one corporal and two privates who took turns staying awake, but misery loves company and our B. C. detail had plenty of both. The early part of the night was clear and it was possible to use the Great Dipper for a pointer to determine our sector on the dark outlines of the hills. By far the greatest trouble was in staying awake during the vigil, the coldness of the night seemed to numb rather than stimulate the senses. Before midnight the damp cold became so penetrating that action was necessary. The opening at the front of the O. P. was filled with dirt and a shelter-half; then, some timbers from the trenches and a few loose stakes from the barbed wire out in front were chopped up as fuel for a fire. Six men at a time could crowd in around the fire, and three of those had to be telephone operators on the lines to the three batteries of the battalion, the rest of the men took turns upon the roof. A cramped position by the fire did not prevent dozing, the detail could have gone to sleep standing on their heads. It made no difference to the men on guard that a heavy mist shut off any chance of observation, the effort to keep awake was none the less painful. A very amusing game was invented that night. It consisted in waiting ten minutes before glancing at a watch, then, after twenty minutes had surely passed and some more for good measure, to look at the time and find it was eight minutes later! That was no fun at all, it takes two to play a game. By seven o'clock it was daylight and the outpost was recalled.

During the morning we were notified to be ready to move at four o'clock in the afternoon. The preparation to move would consume at least ten minutes for the making

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

of rolls, but the regimental commander in view of such a vast amount of work ordered the kitchen to close and serve no hot coffee or "goldfish." Most kitchens which have the nerve to serve coffee and "goldfish" such as that one did, ought to be ordered to close, but under the circumstances there could have been no worse way to prepare for the march. Perhaps the order was obeyed in spirit but evaded in practice because no man was seen to go without his noon-day meal.

When Battery "D" started to pull out to the road which led forward over the Cote de Talou it was seen that real trouble was in store. A rain had rendered the hillside soft and so muddy that the horses were helpless, but fortunately it was still daylight or the shell craters would have finished the business. By hitching ten horses to a carriage at one time we reached the road after four hours' of work.

Just at sunset on a clear quiet evening we came to a halt on the forward slope of the Cote de Talou, and looked overhead to see one of the grandest and most fantastic spectacles of the war. There had been a number of airplanes back and forth over our heads, but the majority wore the Hun cross which was the center of an uninterrupted group of shrapnel puffs. There was nothing unusual in that and we only followed their courses casually while leaning up against a caisson wheel waiting for the column to move. Then for a time the sky was almost deserted, it was the lull before the storm. Up from the south there came a flock of planes in a V shaped formation headed north. We noticed the perfect alignment which was kept by the twenty planes in the group. Then there appeared behind them, to the right, and to the left other similar formations; they sprang unexpectedly into sight on all sides, as if our eyes had just been opened to the mysterious things which the sky held. Over our heads the airplanes dotted the sky at various altitudes, and they came up from the west in black swarms against the red sunset. Some of the battery mathematicians started in to count the number of planes seen in the air at one time, but after counting two hundred and fifty there was no place to start and no place to stop. One plane, faster and smaller than the others, darted around by itself,

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

and acted as guide for the multitude. The German "archies" set up a fierce fire, their target was the sky which they could not miss, but we only observed two planes brought down. They flew over the wooded hills to the north, and out of the midst of those woods there mounted a column of smoke followed by a dull roar of a gigantic explosion. But that was all. The host swung around in unbroken formation and disappeared to the southwest. Whence they came, or whither they went is a mystery, but the majesty of the spectacle was as inspiring for us as it must have been dumfounding to the enemy. The incident was not recalled during the night which followed, however.

Our column moved down hill and through a ruined town filthy with dead horses, which had been shelled and were lying along the road in a most disgusting condition. Our own horses were tired and some of them refused to pull so that it was a relief to reach the hard level road along the bank of the river. There was much traffic on the road and progress was slow with many halts; it was merely a question of following the leader, who had no idea where we were going and nobody could exert the energy to care. About midnight we halted with the Meuse River on the left and a pile of debris called Brabant on the right. Turning away from the river in the direction of a hill which rose beyond Brabant to the northeast we endeavored to ascend among the shell holes and debris. But the place was teeming with doughboys, engineers, machine gun trains and rolling kitchens, and in the pitch blackness the battery was hopelessly blocked.

The situation afforded an opportunity for the B. C. detail to ride ahead and make a reconnaissance of the hill on which our positions were located. Out on the hillside everything was deserted and desolate, it was necessary to ride in single column, and with Major Fibich in the lead we took up a fast trot over a trail torn with fresh shell holes, where it was a foregone conclusion that the horses would speedily tumble and break their legs. It being impossible to see the pitfalls and guide the horses the only thing to do was to give them their heads and confine our efforts to staying awake and on their backs so long as they remained upright. Once there

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

was a sudden stop when the horses in the rear bunched up on to those in front before they could check their automatic trotting. The reason proved to be a barbed wire entanglement which stretched across the path and off into the darkness on each side.

After a little investigation a loose section was found which could be pushed aside enough to allow the horses to pass. Just beyond the barbed-wire a body lay across the road, it was that of an infantry lieutenant who had been hit squarely in the forehead by a machine gun bullet and lay where he fell. The top of the hill was desolate and barren, and only one bent sappling stood out against the sky. The silence was ominous. No artillery action could be heard except at some distant part of the battlefield, and the only sound was an intermittent sputter from machine guns a few hundred yards away which increased the feeling of the enemy's proximity. Below and a little distance to the north the dim shadow of a woods was just discernible. Major Fibich was anything but content with the area within which he must locate his batteries. It was on the forward slope of the hill, in full view of all the battlefield, and the prospect for enduring in action on such an exposed spot was about five minutes. At least there was a clear field of fire for the shells which the "doughboys" sorely needed. The only shelter which the place afforded was part of the German trench system which ran parallel to the road: but to make that accommodate the guns would require considerable remodeling, and the alternative was to place them in the open. It was therefore decided to put the guns into position along the road with a line of fire directly north into the woods. The German trenches were part of the powerful Hunding Stellung, and at least three lines beyond those trenches which we had seen from the Cote de Talou. The dugouts were numerous and so deep that although their entrances faced the wrong way, they afforded good protection. The reconnaissance party investigated the capacity of the dugouts with some trepidation, since there was no telling what desperate Boche might not be cornered in the filthy depths.

The biggest problem of the entire night was still un-

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

solved. It was three o'clock in the morning and not a gun had put in an appearance on the hillside. The strength of men and horses was practically exhausted when they stood in the blockade in Brabant; but to get the three batteries disentangled and into position before there was any chance for rest a new standard of endurance had to be set. The cannoneers were equipped with picks and shovels and sent ahead to clear the barbed-wire and fill in shell-holes, and to stand as markers to warn the drivers to keep clear when the holes were too deep to be mended. One at a time the carriages pushed and strained a way through the congestion in Brabant only to find the horses refusing to work on the hill. When one gun of the battery ahead fell into a hole the horses preferred to die rather than stay in the army, so the gun had to be lifted out by hand before anything could budge an inch. It was a long kilometer to the position on the hill, but by relaying eight or ten horses to a carriage somehow or other the deed was done, and the last limber of Battery F rattled back down the hill to the echelon by the river just as broad daylight came on. We knew there was to be an attack in the morning but daylight found us still without information from the infantry so we crowded together in the dugouts and abris with the intention of relaxing and opening a can of "Willy." Suddenly a stinging chemical odor penetrated from the outside world—GAS! It was a gloomy way to start operations in our new position when all conversation, eating and sleeping was smothered under the masks so we just sat in silence and glared at each other through the glass eye pieces. At last when we came out into the clear air we were able to correct the imperfect impression of the surrounding country gained during the night's work on the hill. Our guns faced north and covered a heavily wooded ridge that rose out of a hollow about five hundred yards in front. The woods extended east and north into higher ground, where was the famous Bois de Grande Montagne. The trees stopped abruptly on the left front and the rest of the ground in that direction was bare and shell torn like our own hill. It rolled down into the Meuse valley where the course of the river could be followed with the eye for several miles as it twisted its way among

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

the hills to the north. A few shattered walls and the remnant of a church marked the site of Consenvoye-sur-Meuse. To the east and south all view was shut off by the bulk of the hill on which we found ourselves. The road which ran through the position followed the contour of the ground and bending north it disappeared into the woods toward Molleville Farm to the northeast.

Early on that first morning the infantry of the 29th Division launched an attack to drive the Germans out of the woods just in front of us and over the ridge. We made a rough adjustment of fire against the ridge by direct observation of bursts, where the bursting shells were visible to the cannoneers. It was the nearest we ever got to open warfare methods. Fortunately for our health on that first day the Boche was hustled so that he had little artillery in position against our exposed hillside and it was not until a week later that his guns became dangerously active but then the chance for direct observation had passed.

It is hard to punctuate the three weeks of time which we spent on Brabant hill. The days were full of events pertaining to a lively sector, but they left practically no impression of time on our minds which were deadened by irregular hours and hard work. The last sleep worthy of the name dated back five days to the Cote-de-Talou, so that our condition closely resembled that of the proverbial bump on a log. Down in the woods the fighting was desperate. The enemy at first held two wooded ridges behind which was the Grand Montagne, higher than the rest and dominating the country for miles on both sides; it was there that the Germans proposed to fall back if the mad Yankees should take the vicious machine-gun nests which were thickly planted in that rough and tangled country. For two weeks our guns prepared and supported the attack of the 29th and 33rd Divisions operating in the Bois de Grande Montagne to the north and in Bois de Estraye to the east. A rectangular field containing the orchard and farm buildings of Molleville Farm was the only break in the woods. The southeast corner of the place was easily identified both on the terrain and on the map so that it was there that we adjusted fire, and, even after our

troops had gained possession of the farm, which they did on the third day, we continued to use it as a base point, and fire was directed on every part of the sector by measurements made east and west of Molleville.

Enemy fire came upon us from an unexpected quarter, showing that we were on the forward edge of a salient. While our fire was directed into the woods toward the north the hostile shells came screaming over Brabant Hill from the east. The enfilade fire was unpleasant especially since many of the shells were of small calibre and we could easily hear the reports of the guns that sent them. But for many days the glaring disadvantages of the position seemed to render it safe. The Hun who had occupied the place for four years knew the lay of the land better than we and it never occurred to his sense that guns would ever be placed where ours were placed. They shelled the hollow just in front, an ideal place for artillery defilade; they shelled the high ground just behind, a first-class location for observers; they shelled the bend in the road one hundred yards east where traffic ought to be caught in swarms; and they shelled the little clump of trees half-way down the road toward Brabant, where was good concealment for an echelon. But in all that shelling of the first two weeks only a few erratics landed squarely among our guns. Even with balloon and air-plane observation, which the enemy continually maintained without interference from our air service, it took two weeks to penetrate his stubborn ideas on the rightness of things that what he saw along the road was not Engineers, who could dive quickly under cover when the shells came, but Yankee artillery in the open in defiance of all custom. The Germans had aerial observation all their own way on the east side of the Meuse. The great display of Allied air power which we had seen during the march to Brabant had completely vanished. Occasionally an Allied plane appeared but the tables were reversed in the matter of shrapnel greetings. One day a sudden burst of machine gun fire was heard over the bend in the road. There was nothing unusual in that, machine guns were continually popping at aeroplanes, and the aeroplanes used them not only to fight but also to signal to one another when

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

on a scouting expedition. But this time we looked up to see five black-cross machines flying low as though about to pounce on the road which was filled with troops; the situation was made clear by the "zip-zip" of bullets that stung the ground on every hand. The place was cleared quicker than it takes to say "Jack Robinson," every soldier flopped down into the trench along the road. The aeroplanes flew straight down the length of the trench and reaching its western limit they circled off and made the same trip all over again. By the grace of God, nobody was hit except a man in Battery D, who got a bullet in his hand. The incident aroused much ire, and we were in a mood to prop the guns straight upward and blast the pests out of the air. We expected an aftermath of shells accurately placed but the aviators must have been too busy with the sights on their machine guns to notice the obvious patches of green camouflage which concealed the battery, and they evidently took us for transient troops or Engineers working on the road.

After the first few days of activity, there was a time of comparative quiet when the infantry rested and refilled their shattered ranks. We decided to take the opportunity to build ourselves shelters back of the guns where we could live in the society of our own personal cooties instead of thirty feet under the ground in the filthy German holes. Soon the whole parapet of the trench which bordered the road was punctured by a line of tiny dugouts; the entrances faced toward the north which could not be helped under the circumstances where all the works and even the slope of the hill faced the wrong way. The chance of flying splinters entering was reduced by making the entrance very narrow for several feet and then widening out the excavation just enough to accommodate the men who were digging it; the whole thing was then roofed over with several sheets of iron supported by rails and covered with a few inches of dirt and branches for camouflage. The mansions on Beaver Avenue were scarcely splinter-roof but their chief advantage lay in their small size. Each man felt as though he occupied only a speck which could remain untouched even if all the area around were shelled.

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

We did not keep union hours on Brabant hill; the days were twenty-four hours long. There was something vicious in the way the telephone buzzed in our P. C. and upset things at any hour of the night. The day's work usually commenced late in the evening, when battalion headquarters called "Boon," the code name for Battery F, and gave us the missions for the next twenty-four hours. That consisted in several kinds of barrage: normal, contingent, reinforcing, reprisal fires, and an O.C.P. (offensive counter preparation). When our troops were pushing and being pushed in the thickets between us and the Grande Montagne the data had to be changed every night. If conditions were normal, "breakfast" was served at 7 o'clock. The first week it was called breakfast only out of courtesy to that established institution, when one piece of bacon per man was an equal distribution of the ration, and it served more as an appetizer than anything else. There was a time when we would have relished shoe-soup; but Willy, dessicated vegetables, syrup and bread turned up in increasing quantities. During the last week nothing interfered with fairly respectable meals except shells and gas. The normal business of the day consisted in keeping the guns going at so many rounds per minute on some prescribed area behind the enemy's lines, a slow fire which generally kept up for six or more hours at a stretch. The supplying of ammunition was always strenuous work, because we were supposed to keep a fixed number of rounds on hand at each gun, generally not less than a hundred rounds of shell. The ammunition train brought these up at night and placed them in a battalion dump below the left flank of Battery F, from where they had to be carried by hand to the guns and placed in small piles camouflaged with green branches. In the frequent event of a rolling barrage to support an early morning attack we were up all night bringing the ammunition to the battery reserve. Even then the work was never finished. In addition to everything else, there was a constant need for better protection. The gun pits had to be deepened and splinter-proof trenches built on each side of the trails, from which shelter the gunners were required to fire their pieces with a long lanyard when the fire was not too rapid. On

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

the other hand in the heat of a barrage the cannoneers were capable of disposing in a few minutes of all the ammunition which it had taken several nights to accumulate.

It was at such a time that the guns roared on for hour after hour, throwing a line of shells that crept up through the woods in search of the deadly machine-gun nests. A gun which was not firing was always laid on the line of the defensive barrage and had a fused shell leaning against the breech, and a man on the alert to shove home the shell and pull the lanyard in the event of a signal rocket appearing above the trees in front. But quiet guns were the exception on Brabant Hill, because if there was nothing else on the slate we indulged in "harassing fire." That was directed on some crossroad or other important point behind the enemy's lines, where scattered volleys would be planted at irregular intervals of five or ten minutes. The effect was contemplated to be demoralizing, with a burst of fire at unexpected moments. The favorite time for such a pastime was between midnight and daylight because it was then that the most traffic could be caught on the roads. Retaliation fire was a trump which we used on certain occasions with great satisfaction. The chiefs of sections carried in their pockets the deflections and elevations for a couple of ammunition dumps and towns where troops were billeted back of the enemy's lines. When the Huns "straffed" the road near the position, a burst of fire would be returned against the vital spot at a maximum rate, usually six rounds per gun per minute for three minutes. It was a language of the battlefield which said "very well, then, take *that!*" delivered in a dialect of poison gas which Fritz understood perfectly.

During the three weeks when the battery was operating on Brabant Hill we sent a detail of observers and liaison men into the woods with the infantry: Corporal Hicks, Corporal Vanderlin, Hastings and Rennie have a different story to tell of the operations in front of the Grande Montagne. Access to the woods was gained most easily by avoiding the barbed wire and trenches in the hollow and following the road which swung northeast from our position. Just before entering the woods there was a spot where several infantry kitchens

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

had been bold enough to push so far forward and locate near a spring of clear water. The Germans, who had probably been making a similar use of the place only a few days before, were mindful of it and let no day pass without shelling strenuously the kitchens and the road. Several horses had been struck and lay there horribly mangled beside a pile of bread, but to doughboy appetites the combination "max nix



LIEUT. BRADFORD

aus." A hundred yards further among the trees was the P. C. of the 115th infantry regiment with which we maintained telephone connection. The Germans had built for themselves a little cottage not unattractive with a veranda and protected on one side with a huge shell-proof screen of heavy timbers and matting. Beside the cottage there was a preposterous beer garden, which was not completely built when the property changed hands. Since then this P. C. was a favorite

target, and judging by the number of direct hits which had been registered on the cottage it was well that the colonel, his staff and our own operators had found shelter thirty feet underground in concrete dugouts. It was difficult to navigate through the woods where the paths were ankle deep with filthy black mud except where the fierce shelling had left parts of the German corduroy paths. The underbrush was not only thick but full of shell holes and pitfalls and the bodies of Americans and Germans lay in hopelessly equal numbers. Most of those had been gathered together along the road where they would be buried in a long grave, but in the heat of battle many were overlooked. A crossroad and a narrow gauge railroad divided the Bois d' Estraye from the Bois de Grande Montagne just west of Molleville Farm. In there the front lines were very close; the remains of machine gun nests, or pests, were on every hand but there was no sympathy to waste on the young Germans whose corpses lay beside their guns where they had evidently died game when deserted by their retreating comrades. One had to look lively in those woods even when there was the terrible suspense of silence. There was no warning shriek from the shells which tore through the underbrush every now and then. For protection from such an incident a strong "abri" constituted a sort of half-way station between the road and the front line. It was occupied by some stoical members of the medical corps who maintained a first aid station marked at the entrance by a couple of bloody stretchers and five or six grim bodies.

The front line was not a line at all. It was an irregular series of small trenches, none of which was large enough to hold more than eight men, and most of them accommodated only two or three men. Machine guns placed at intervals formed the connecting links in that temporary system of defense. If we had relinquished the offensive and prepared to dig in for the winter those scattered holes would have been enlarged and connected, barbed wire would have been installed out in front of the unbroken front line fortifications which had been characteristic of the war for four years. Where the hill fell away more steeply there was an opening in the trees through which could be seen the opposing slope of the Grande Mon-

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

tagne only a few hundred yards away. That was all enemy territory, and any observer who showed himself to it was subject to an immediate visitation. We'll have to hand it to the boys down in those woods. They lived in an atmosphere that was never pure, the underbrush caught and held the gas almost indefinitely. It seems possible that in the future (months after the last shell has loosed its poison) some curious tourist will go nosing around among the bushes and find his eyes begin to smart.

The men at the echelon have still a different story. The river bottom along the Consenvoy road had been selected as the place for the horses. The spot was well protected by a high bluff. German shells frequently hurtled over and exploded in the canal beyond, but none ever fell on the crowded horse lines. Unfortunately, however, the loss in horses at this place was very heavy. Many causes contributed. The horses had performed much hard work under very trying conditions; the forage was scarce; it was impossible to properly care for the animals without grooming kits, which had been lost with all our freight from America, and had never been replaced. The prime cause, however, was the situation of the echelon. The ground upon which the horses stood was below the level of the Meuse canal which was held in by dykes. Rain and lack of drainage made the picket lines seas of cold mud. Horses stood in water and mud above the crown of the hoof and when a horse lay down he was chilled and stiffened; it was often impossible to get him up. Pneumonia took a high toll among the weakened animals. No one who knew anything about horses was surprised at the heavy mortality and the battery commanders often considered how long we could stay in Brabant and yet be able to move away. It was in such conditions that the drivers lived and worked. Without the excitement of the front, they labored day and night hauling ammunition, rubbing, feeding, watering, grazing and burying their horses. Their faithfulness was not without avail, for First Sergeant Rayburn who for most of the time was in charge of the Battery "F" horse lines, was cited in brigade orders for the good condition of horses and materiel left in his charge.

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

During the last half of our stay in Brabant changes were evident in the several situations. The Germans did not have unchallenged control of the air. There had been days when their aeroplanes flew back and forth unmolested. Now the red, white and blue circle could be seen patrolling the sky at intervals. One fine afternoon when the planes were so numerous that we had ceased to notice them, somebody said, "look there!" We looked, to see one of the machines in flames and entirely out of control. Probably the aviator was killed at the first explosion of the gasoline tank. It was falling from a great height but with slow, steep spirals, until about two hundred feet from the ground it collapsed and plunged to the ground near the edge of the woods in front of us. We have always indulged the theory that it was a Hun who was the victim of that spectacle, but we never took an opportunity to verify that theory by an examination of the wreckage.

The prisoners who came passed our guns were a testimony to the type of troops that faced us. They were young and well equipped. Germany had thrown in her best soldiers to protect this sector after the initial disaster to the wretched Austrians. Thus the defense was weakened on the west bank of the Meuse to such an extent that the American victory at Stenay in the first week of November was made possible. From our narrow viewpoint the German defense was tremendously stiffened. Little progress was made down in the woods, and few prisoners were taken. Several times the enemy counter-attacked and gained some local success. But the tide of battle was against them and during one of those enemy counters they ran into their own barrage which was so effective that our men followed by gaining considerable ground.

Corporal Hage used to question the prisoners that came by our P. C. They knew more than we did about what the near future had in store. The Huns were sick and tired of the war; they spoke of revolution at home, and stated that the Kaiser was "persona non grata." They were unanimous that the war would be over within a month. One day

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

a doughboy came by escorting a single German captive. "Where did you get that, Bill?" The answer was, "Oh, he just got tired and walked over to us last night."

The first battalion of the 323rd came up one night to share the honors on Brabant Hill. They moved past the positions of the second battalion and placed their guns about four hundred yards to the northeast where a little depression afforded an inviting defilade. We pitied them for the spot was a catch-all for shells. They got their share. It was a daily occurrence to watch them scampering to their dugouts.

Once an enormous gas shell exploded on the slope out in front. The poisonous fumes were emitted in a heavy yellow-green cloud that tumbled about at first in all directions and then collecting itself it roiled down hill. Out in front of that cloud a man was running at top speed. We felt like shouting advice to him to turn off to the right or left; but he kept on down the hill with the blight at his heels. Apparently he ran faster than fate.

The least brutal but a highly effective weapon used in our sector was propaganda. Toward the close the Allies indulged more in propaganda on the front lines than did our enemies who initiated it. They were beaten at their own game.

Allied planes were never so commonplace over the Brabant sector but that we usually watched them with great satisfaction. One afternoon six planes flew overhead at a great height. They were seeking neither observations nor a fight. Every now and then a little puff of what looked like smoke issued from them, and it looked as though they would presently come hurtling to the ground, but the puffs did not disappear; they simply became a silvery dust that floated down over the enemy lines. Hundreds of illustrated leaflets had been dropped which told the German soldiers a few pertinent facts about what they were up against.

In the closing days of October we overstayed our welcome on Brabant Hill. It began to dawn on enemy intelligence that the troops which they observed so often on the exposed slope were not transient passers-by but a battalion of guns in position. They looked us over from an observation balloon beyond the

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

woods. They scrutinized us from aeroplanes and dropped rockets to indicate their findings. Once a big black cross swooped down so low we thought he was going to make a landing. We could see the goggles of the aviator peering over his fusilage, after which aggravating stare he went his way.

The shells arrived in bunches from the east. They doted on the small hours of the morning and also in the late afternoon. The last week it was a regular thing to be wakened up by a rapid succession of whizz—cracks! It usually started down in Battery D and walked along the line of shelters. It was when they were bursting around our little shelters that we began figuring on the relative chances of a direct hit on our roof to those of the hits all around us. And then the whistle became longer and the cracks duller as the shells went on their way over Battery F and down the hill beyond. The wonder of the whole thing is the number of hits that were beside, around and between everything, and the comparatively few casualties that were suffered in the battalion.

The saddest and most frightful happening of all our stay occurred one morning after an attack. An ambulance loaded with wounded came out of the woods and followed the road which led behind our guns. Just to the east of Battery D a shell tore off the rear end of the ambulance. The driver, stunned and desperate, opened up the throttle, and the ambulance came plunging along at a terrific speed. Back of Battery F a wheel came off, the wreck was complete. Three of the occupants had been killed outright and four others were so horribly mangled that they must surely have died within a few hours. A lieutenant who was riding on the front seat had suffered shell shock and was out of his head. It was such a fearful catastrophe to happen to those men who were on their way to peace and safety that those of us who saw it will never forget the sight.

About October 20th, Lieutenant Colonel Hopkins was placed in command of the regiment, vice Colonel McKinlay transferred. He took charge of us under auspicious circumstances. It was the day that we received a paper which told of President Wilson's decision to turn over the determination of armistice terms to Marshal Foch. But if there was some

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

talk of a cessation of hostilities it was confined to government circles. We received orders to prepare winter quarters back of the hill. Digging in for the winter was not a pleasant prospect, but it was about time to move back of the hill.

The new positions were located in an extensive Boche trench system. Portions of a large trench were assigned to each battery, and substantial improvements were contemplated. It was intended to dig gun emplacements as quickly as possible by excavating the walls of the trench. The guns could then be moved, and the work of improving the dugouts and covering the position would follow. Considerable work was done on the winter quarters. We left just enough men at the guns to serve them, and the others got busy with picks and shovels. It was beginning to look as though we might move over after one more day, when the inevitable happened. The locations were shifted around, and we had to get busy with the compass goniometer and picks and shovels all over again. We were on the west slope of the hill, down below us was the town of Brabant. About half way to the town was a little war-torn orchard in which a battery from the 101st artillery was located. Big shells went swishing overhead at irregular intervals. They had a lazy sort of sound as they waddled through the air, but so great was the explosion which followed that we always watched to see where they would land. We had just put in a stake to mark No. 4 gun, which was farthest down the hill and only a couple of hundred yards from the other battery, when a swish was heard overhead, followed by a momentary pause, and then a crackling roar. The projectile had struck right on top of one of the "75's" where nothing was left except burning camouflage.

There was such a rush to move into the position latest projected that we were ordered to push the work day and night. Accordingly a detail was sent back during the evening to "carry on" in the darkness. It had no sooner set out to work than the whole proceeding was called off. The "powers that be" had decreed that the 158th Brigade would withdraw and go to a rest camp. Accordingly a battalion of New York artillery was moving into a depression on

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

the left front for the purpose of taking over our sector and mission. It was a delightful turn of events, but the one day left to us on Brabant Hill was to be the most strenuous of all from the point of view of enemy fire.

Shells from "seventy-sevens" started coming over in the early morning, and kept it up intermittently until 11 o'clock, when a furious burst of fire descended upon us. Major Fibich ordered a reprisal fire, and all the guns of the battalion were concentrated on "Solferino" with gas shells. The gas shells were kept across the road from the guns and it was necessary to carry them up during the fire. We shall always bear in memory the picture of poor Phillips, as he plodded back and forth between his gun and the pile of shells. The fact that hell was torn loose in his path seemed to have no effect on Phillips or cause him to turn the slightest from the calm pursuit of his duty. And then a shell came and blew out his life, and his mangled body was thrown fifty feet.

When the bombardment burst upon us most furiously there was a transport wagon coming up the hill. The driver was prompted by the instinct of self preservation and abandoned his team. Then the horses became crazed and dashed around among our guns, dragging the wagon even down in front of the muzzles. Finally a shell put an end to the evolutions, and two fine horses lay dead in harness. The driver has never been heard from to this day.

A doughboy had stopped to rest and was sitting beside the road. He was probably a colonel's orderly because he had in his possession a colonel's dinner. We hardly noticed the poor fellow until his body or half of it, because there were no legs, lay thirty yards from the scattered provisions. A shell had made a direct hit, yet there in the road lay unbroken eggs.

After that there was a lull in the firing which seemed like profound quietness. We ate our lunch of tomatoes and corn-willy, and wondered how we could. Some of the men at the colonel's luckless meal of eggs. During the afternoon some graves were dug beside those of the ambulance victims.

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

As for the horses, we never did get a hole large enough to bury them and when we left they were just where they had fallen.

Supper that evening was no social collation. We were interrupted so much by the gas-alarms that everybody resolved that they would not be thwarted. So that at each alarm the mess line waited patiently in their masks, and when the coast was clear the serving proceeded from the point where it had left off. That occurred three times and only those who had a French mask handy for just such an occasion were spared the unpleasant necessity of spitting out a mouthful of food suddenly in order to insert the mouthpiece.

During the evening we waited rather impatiently for the 104th F. A. to report that their guns were laid on our barrage lines, and that they were supplied with ammunition. We could not move from the position until that condition existed. They requested more ammunition and we detailed some men to help them expedite matters. All evening high explosives burst in front of our guns with unremitting regularity. They seemed particularly vicious on that night. Perhaps it was because we were so near to leaving it all that it was especially annoying to senses which were about to relax. But more likely the enemy was using instantaneous fuses which caused a hideous scattering of the fragments. They went hissing in every direction after the shell had exploded. It was as though they said, "you think the worst is over, but we'll—zip—get you, whee plunk, yet."

By 2 o'clock in the evening the bombardment quieted down, the limbers came up from their mud beside the river, and we quietly took the road toward Verdun.

Round Up

*"Silence is the perfectest herald of joy."—
Much Ado.*

THE abandonment of plans for digging into winter quarters, and the withdrawal from Brabant Hill were the first events in the changed affairs of the Three Twenty-third *Light*. The war took on a new aspect from



BOIS DE MONTFAUCON

that date and each circumstance of the last two weeks was as welcome as it was unexpected.

The outlook of the war at large didn't change so suddenly, only our knowledge of it. The perspective from Brabant Hill had been confined within the narrow limits of the Meuse River on the west and Molleville Farm on the east.

A History of Battery F 325d Field Artillery

Rumors of peace talk reached us, it is true, but they were never in more stable guise than rumors, and they were always punctuated by enemy machine guns or the whir of a Hun plane. When we read press reports of Allied victories in the north, it was by the light of bursting shells. And so the limits defined, only threw a red glare on our outlook. But once away from that sector, we began to see what the last war-maps have now proven to be true. That we had been knocking at the hinge of the Western Front, and that the hinge, which was the strongest part, would not break until the great door had swung back from Brabant to the Belgian coast. This it did one week later when the door swung back so sharply that it not only wrenched loose the hinge north of Verdun, but tore out the bolts of Metz as well.

About 10 o'clock in the evening, the limbers and horses appeared on the hill from their echelon by the river. Whereas, we had left training camp with 130 horses, the mud along the Meuse and the nightly ammunition orgies had decimated the animals so that there were only about 70 remaining. And for that reason a caisson and a fourgon had to be abandoned. It was no secret this time that our destination was the Bois de Ville, back of Verdun, which is better identified as being just across the road from the nightmare headquarters in Gallieni. After a night so dull that it hurt, when the brigade unintelligently marched again behind the slowly moving heavies, we arrived in the woods about noon of the following day. The fact that we were there for a rest implied a stay of from three days to a week; but what a mistake!

The first and last night in rest camp was everything that the name implies. We had arrived in the middle of the afternoon and so had several hours of daylight in which to put our house in order. There were long frame buildings for the men and little huts for the officers. After the filth had been pushed out of the door, they seemed like palatial quarters in comparison with the dugouts back at Brabant. The sound of distant firing could be easily heard, but we rested secure in the thought that we were well out of range. At 7 o'clock in the evening, the entire regiment was sound asleep, and at 7 o'clock in the morning it was just beginning to wake up.

A History of Battery F 325d Field Artillery

It was the last day of October. Another one of those bright days so unusual for that time of year in France. Undoubtedly the fine weather which was experienced on the Western Front in October contributed to hasten the day of the armistice, at least it made possible the final great military operations of the Allies. The weather had effected some improvement in the fiendish mire that engulfed us on the former visit to those woods. There was plenty of mud, that was eternal. But this time, it was possible to traverse the mud by a series of detours and broad-jumps on what in general terms could be called a path.

The supply officer received a consignment of new clothing for the men. We were badly in need of it. At the same time, orders came that we would be on the road ready to march by 4 o'clock in the afternoon. It seemed as though the spirit of unrest that haunted Gallieni was getting the upper hand. The one night of untrammelled sleep could not atone for the disturbance that had first given that place its reputation. Three nights in rest camp might have, but that was denied us. The rest of the day until the middle of the afternoon was spent in issuing breeches and rubber boots. The boots were particularly welcome for many of the men had worn out their shoes. The oceans of mud rendered worn shoes uncomfortable and unhealthy. But our pleasure was short lived. The equipment manual for artillery regiments did not provide for an issue of rubber boots so that a high commander was legally justified in ordering the boots turned in because he objected to the appearance of the men's rolls with the boots strapped to them.

It was just getting dusk when we took the road. The usual circumstances prevailed in which we were in total ignorance of where we were going or what adventure would be the next. It was simply a case of follow the leader. One always had the same feeling during the night marches. A sense of resignation and of doing the thing immediately at hand without a thought to waste on expectations. The outlook was all confined to the vehicle immediately in front. That might be the leading carriage or it might be behind four miles of other carriages, but nevertheless, it controlled without a word

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

the lives and movements of those who stared at it from behind. We learned to know the details of the carriage in front just as a sick man knows the spots and lines on the ceiling over his head.

That frame of mind prevailed when it was discovered that the column had passed three kilometers toward the west and was in Nixeville. A church bell struck the hour—7 o'clock. It was an impressive and wonderful sound—a prophecy of the peace which was eleven days off. Many miles back of the German lines there was another town and another church bell striking the hour. But between Nixeville and Marville, there stretched the hideous tract of the Western Front, in which no peaceful citizen had an abode. Our column turned north, and we heard no more church bells until nearly three weeks later when the barrier had been crossed and we heard a bell in Marville ring out the tidings of deliverance of the latter town from the German yoke.

Our march was in the same general direction from which we had come when withdrawing from the Argonne. But the road was up on the heights to the east of the narrow valley which led toward Verdun. There were no trees, and in the dull gray light it seemed as though we could look off into infinite distances. The only thing to divert attention from the carriage in front was a flashing, which illuminated the sky at regular intervals. It proceeded from the plateau ahead of us. At first we took it for a signal projector, and tried to read the message. Dot dash dot, dot dash dot, over and over again by the hour, it never changed. At length, we passed right by the source. It proved to be a battery of six searchlights which illuminated a level area, the landing place of night bombing planes. The signal flash was intended to act as a candle in the window, when the aviators, who were probably soaring over the Rhine should return home. We wondered why such a display did not invite immediate destruction from Hun fliers.

In the wee small hours, we descended into the woods and pulled up along the side of the road to spend what was left of the night. At the time it did not concern our thoughts

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

where we were on that morning. Recent inquiries proves the place to have been the Bois de Bethelainville, a part of the Argonne.

At zero hour on the morning of November 1st, a powerful offensive was commenced by the American First Army operating on the west bank of the Meuse. The attack was destined to be the knock-out punch of the war. The three-twenty-third was so sound asleep after its march from Verdun that our knowledge of what was going on would have been the same if we had been in Timbuctoo instead of in reserve just behind the lines. The first intimation that big game was afoot, came when we received orders to take the road at 8 o'clock. That was the first time since we had joined the "active list" that a march started in the full light of morning. It was contrary to all precepts of secrecy and safety. We knew then, that somebody was on the run, and with a justified optimism, guessed who that somebody might be.

The column was quickly formed and started out at a rapid pace over a good road. The woods were deserted and desolate. Discarded equipment and debris of troops, together with numerous dugouts, showed how recently the vicinity had been the scene of fighting. But the tide of battle had swept on toward the north and left us to overtake it as best we could.

The sun was bright, the road was dry and we felt very cheerful on that victorious march over the hilly road in the Argonne. It was a policy to rest ten minutes out of every hour. During one such rest, we heard a rumor of those good tidings which were exulting the whole civilized world. An officer from the 32nd Division headquarters rode by and reined in his horse long enough to tell us that Austria was begging for immediate peace. Such news accomplished everything which could be expected toward raising our spirits, and about noon we cleared the woods and found ourselves on the scarred fields back of Montfaucon. The vicinity was familiar although we were further to the west than on our previous visit. Among all the destruction which we had seen there was nothing to equal that landscape. The illimitable stretches of barbed wire and trench systems had almost lost their outline. Large trees

A History of Battery F 325d Field Artillery

had been sheared off and then their stumps uprooted. The ground on every hand was overturned by the bombardment of huge shells so that it was as rough as the ocean during a storm in the deep sea. In fact the whole face of nature had been changed by the great barrage of September 26th. The road which crossed that wilderness was only passable by virtue of feats of repairing accomplished by American engineers. The memory of the great barrage which had been the experience of our first night on the front made the spectacle of its effect very interesting. We observed plain evidence of the rapid German withdrawal on that front.

The spirit of victory was in the air. A group of several hundred engineers and doughboys suddenly set up a shout and started pell-mell in one direction. They ran like a crowd might run after a victorious football game. The cause for so unusual an outburst was an order to form a lane through which a hundred and fifty German prisoners passed on their way to the rear. It was the only outbreak of exuberant spirits that we ever saw on the front. And it was a rare contrast to the implacable and philosophical attitude which was usually maintained on every occasion by the soldiers in France.

Everybody was devoured by a great curiosity to know just what was taking place ahead of us; all sorts of rumors were afloat. They said that forty thousand prisoners were taken and that the German armies were in full retreat. It was later established by official communiques that eight thousand had been taken, and that the First Army was meeting with so little resistance that difficulties of transportation were the only things in the way of sweeping through to Sedan.

Later in the afternoon, the gray sky which had dimmed the morning sunlight, now obscured it altogether. The air was raw and damp. The exertions of the march were beginning to tell. It felt as though we had left the rest camp in the Bois de Ville a week before, instead of the day before, inasmuch as there had been only a few hours rest, and one scanty meal since that time. It began to be hard for us to appreciate the good news of the day as we had appreciated it in the morning.

The column passed through Avocourt, which was the name given to a field strewn with bricks, plaster and debris. It was

a total demolition, where not one stone was left standing upon another. Doubtless the few corners which remained standing after the barrage tottered so dangerously that the engineers had pulled them down to use the stone for repairing the roads. Near the site of Avocourt, there were two large tents which showed we were still a long way behind the fight. Just as we passed the tents, a line of about 25 naked men suddenly rushed out of one tent and into the other! That was an unexpected sight. Evidently, the place was a delousing station, and it had a certain appeal to a good many of our men. Capt. Dempsey resolved if we halted near there, to make the best of his opportunities.

But it seemed as though we would never halt until the time when the horses were ready to lie down and die. We reached the seared remnants of the Bois de Montfaucon just before dark. The 322nd Field Artillery which had been ahead of us all day, was pulled off into the mud beside the road. We passed them with great difficulty over the rough ground, and pulled into the woods. Battery F was near the head of the regiment and in order that all the batteries might stow themselves in the designated area it was necessary for us to go deep into the woods. The trees were no hindrance. So many of them had been shot away or cut down for the construction of dugouts and "abris" that the woods were very sparse. But it was a fine feat of driving to steer six horses and a carriage around the shell-holes. The latter were so deep and numerous that they invited destruction at every step. It was a great relief when the battery had plunged sufficiently forward without mishap, and the shout "thatle do" was heard.

In spite of fatigue and surpassing hunger, it was necessary to put immediately into practice the maxim of "horses first." The animals had had no water for more than twenty-four hours, and since none was to be seen in the Bois de Montfaucon, it looked as though we would be shortly immobilized. But some engineers who had a camp nearby, knew of a spring about a mile away, so that with buckets the horses were watered after considerable difficulty in the dark during the course of several hours. The night was raw and a cold drizzle had set in. We had need of a Tom Collins or at least a drink of hot coffee.

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

Great was the disappointment when the water-cart was declared to be empty. Contributions of water from every man's canteen were requested in order that coffee might be forthcoming. Again the engineers who looked so comfortable in their pup tents came to the rescue, and gave us water from their kitchen. The dinner which the cooks prepared was too good; it consisted of a fresh quarter of beef, which we had brought from the "rest camp." The beef had to be cut up and stewed and the cravings of the battery could hardly brook the delay. Some men fell asleep before they had eaten.

It was necessary to find some protection from the cold rain. Most of the men pitched their tents or crawled under a paulin. A few privileged persons found shelter under the fourgons. They had been left near the road where we had turned in. It was worth all that it cost to stumble through the blackness and shell-holes to where the fourgons were standing.

The next morning everybody expected to resume the march, so of course, the march was not resumed. During the morning it was learned that a French ordnance inspector was in the neighborhood. A message was sent requesting him to look at Sergeant Beligoy's piece which had a suspicious scratch in the bore. The inspection of the bore of this gun made by the French officer was the only one of the kind ever made in Battery F after Coetquidan by any officer of higher rank than the battery and battalion commanders. After the armistice, inspections by officers from brigade, division, corps, army or A. E. F. headquarters ranking from major to major general were of nearly daily occurrence. It was considered of the greatest importance that the outside of the painted gun carriage should be smeared over with the priceless mineral oil used in the recoil mechanism, to impress the Germans with our efficiency, but it never occurred to an inspector to open the breech to see if the gun was in a condition to fire. Early in the afternoon Major Fibich declared that we might as well start to get comfortable. It then became a choice between occupying Boche dugouts so filthy that the rats in them must have felt a sense of shame, or erecting some sort of shelter in the drenched outdoors. That debate was cut short by a courier who brought

an order to harness and hitch immediately. It seemed as though the "nemesis" of Gallieni was on our heels. But we were just as well pleased to move out of so homeless a place. Besides, there was no telling how far the battle had gone while we lingered.

The work of breaking camp was easy since there was no camp to break. The horses were harnessed and hitched in. One of them had to be shot and his carcass left to help raise a new forest. That brought the supply of horses to such a low figure that it was impossible to move all the carriages. A caisson was therefore abandoned. The battery was now reduced to four gun sections, three fourgons, a rolling kitchen, a water cart and a ration cart. Our route of march from Brabant Hill was marked by the extra caissons, horses and harness, which had been abandoned. Some of this property was subsequently restored to the battery when a new supply of horses enabled us to send back for caissons.

By half-past two in the afternoon, we had started to pull out of the thickets and shell-holes. It was too good to be true that the pulling out of the woods, which is the hardest part of a march, would be accomplished in broad daylight. We came to a halt behind Battery A. The drivers dismounted and stood ready to drive on when our turn should come. Just below us in the woods we could see the big guns of 324th standing in like predicament waiting their turn. An hour passed and still the movement was held up. The men stamped their feet, the heads of the horses drooped. The afternoon was damp and chilly. Time which has never stopped since the Creation Day did not stop then, but it felt like it. The hours dragged by without a word of explanation or any order to do anything than just to stand and wait. Then came darkness, and we knew what it would mean to get out of there without a wreck. We took our mess kits to the kitchen and had supper. Fires were built and nobody who shivered in the night rain had the heart to order them to be put out. In fact, a few warm bombs would have been welcome. At last when 11 o'clock at night came, there was a stir in Battery A. Men and horses shook out the kinks and silently put in operation the almost forgotten

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

powers of propulsion and that gave us cheer. But we did not realize the difficulty of reaching the road; and we again revised our ideas of what could be accomplished when it had to be. There is a figure of speech which talks of not being able to see the woods for the trees. We could not see the woods for the shell craters and could not see those for the blackness of the night. We pulled ahead a few yards and then stopped to wait for Battery A to make progress. They were having a time of it. Some lanterns were jerked around in the woods ahead and then we heard the old familiar war cry "All cannoneers report." Somebody called for shovels and picks. There was a great straining and grunting and a "now altogether." Battery F dismounted and waited while the first battalion struggled into and out of shell holes and finally after a long delay cleared the woods.

When we moved again every precaution was taken to steer the guns and the sick, worn horses on the bent and narrow way. The cannoneers were saved any amount of toil and swearing by being placed on the lip of every pit fall. It was their duty to shout to the drivers which way to swing their teams. Wherever the path was straight a lantern was held at the end of it with instructions to drive straight for it. Then one carriage at a time was started. This scheme, devised by Major Fibich, worked so well that it is certain that those teams could have passed through the eye of the needle where the camel failed. It is a great credit to the drivers of Battery F that they drove the guns and caissons from the depth of the woods without dropping one carriage into a shell hole and that the entire battery was on the road 20 minutes from the time the final movement began. All other batteries were not so fortunate. One gun fell to the bottom of an exceptionally large hole dragging a horse with it. The animal looked ludicrously content with his ears sticking out above the ground and a little grass to chew at the level of his nose.

The explanation for that deplorable delay was that the brigade was to march as a unit and since Colonel Ashburn, in command of the heavy regiment, was ranking colonel, his outfit was designated to take the lead. The drivers of this

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

regiment had been trained to drive automobiles and trucks and had had no experience with horses until they were issued to them a few days before the brigade left for the front. The inexperience of the men, the inadequacy of the horse flesh, and the great weight of 155 Howitzers, always made the progress of the 324th on the road very slow. But in spite of this, and although the 324th often started from positions in the rear of those occupied by the light regiments and moved to positions behind those to be occupied by them, it was the invariable custom for the 324th to be ordered to move out ahead of the 322nd and 323rd. Many long delays on the cold night marches had hitherto occurred on this account, causing very great hardship to men and animals in the stalled light regiments and undoubtedly aggravating, to a very great degree, the losses in horses. On this particular night, rain had rendered the rough ground of the woods so impassable that some guns of the 324th did not take the road at all. We had yet one more night march to make and it was made under similar conditions.

Once out of the woods, the road on which we found ourselves was good, and the battery rattled along to make up lost time. Montfaucon was close by. We started to ascend the slope toward the town. There was some question whether the horses could make the hill after their hours of harnessed idleness followed by exhausting efforts to get out of the woods. But the road was hard, and the several inches of watery mud on its surface caused little resistance. Before the steepest part of the ascent was reached, we swung to the left and climbed over the west slope of the hill. Once we were held up by a blockade of empty trucks which were trying to pass in the opposite direction. While we waited for a chance to move ahead, a battalion fourgon which was just ahead of the battery, wanted something to do and backed itself into a concrete culvert. We thereupon, had some road clearing to do on our own score. The fourgon was completely unloaded of its valuable instruments, which were layed in the mud, there being no other place to put them. Then with the assistance of battery cannoneers, the pesky wagon was lifted back onto the road.

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

In the wee small hours, a damp chill penetrated to the marrow and it was expedient to travel most of the time on foot. The drivers and the cannoneers spelled each other on the teams. Through the sloppy gray mud, which covered the hard surface of the road, all sensations were simplified into one monotonous plodding, measured only by the long duration of the night.

When the first gray light began to penetrate the black mist so that one could see, the sides of the road and then the fields beyond, we perceived that we were passing through open country where the road was screened by long nets of camouflage. The realization that day had dawned came suddenly when we stopped at a cross road and looked around. Somebody said, "Why, it's daylight." Several military policemen on duty at the cross roads were the companions of the new day. The dormant faculties of thought and curiosity awoke and we asked the M. P. what the news was. And he confirmed the reports of rapid successes on that front. Artillery had been going forward in great numbers, and infantry reinforcements had been rushed forward in trucks. In the wisdom of the M. P. we could not have stood so exposed at that cross road the day before. The spot was one, subject to a prodigious shelling and it was a cause for great wonder why we were undestroyed at that very moment. Perhaps he thought it a chance to play on green imaginations; but more likely a shell had arrived in the memory of that M. P. and it had been multiplied in the telling until each fragment had become a projectile.

A little further on and we passed through the town of Nantillois. One of the buildings which was rather less dilapidated than the others, had a German sign on it, indicating that there used to be an officer's club. Only a few weeks before, it had evidently been so far behind the lines that it constituted a sort of Boche S. O. S. where officers might come for rest and recuperation. But times had changed. It was now so far behind the lines in the opposite sense that Nantillois was an American watering place. There were signs up with big arrows pointing to "water for men and animals."

Beyond the town, there was a long steep hill, but the

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

horses seemed to share the sense of stimulation which always came with daylight, no matter how hard had been the preceding night. We climbed it slowly but without hesitation. At the top there was a large dump of water-soaked bread. It made a very certain appeal. But a nearby soldier, when questioned on the subject, said that a gas bomb had exploded so near to the bread that morning as to render it dangerous to touch. That sounded like a convenient argument but when a man says that bread has been gassed, it isn't worth while to debate the question.

On the right of the road, there was a crowded German cemetery. It was well built and judging by the weather-stained tombstones and crosses, it had been in use since the first year of the war. A testimony of German short-sighted foresightedness, was the gate. It was a stone monument with an inscription; such a thing as might grace German soil forever! Only fifty yards beyond that German construction was the first large American cemetery that we had seen on the battlefield. It was simpler and infinitely nobler than the other. In contrast to the ornate stones, were the rows of little wood crosses newly made; on each was fastened the identification tag of the soldier whose grave it marked.

As we progressed, the signs of recent desperate fighting increased. There had been a stretch where shell-holes were peculiarly scarce. But now we were approaching a new line of resistance. A number of dead mules lay around in weird postures. There were perhaps a half dozen ruined tanks scattered here and there. They were of both the large and small type. Most of them, sadly enough, were French tanks. They had their sides mashed in probably by shells from a "77" which must have killed all the occupants. One German tank was faced by a French only fifty yards away. By their positions it was easy to imagine the titantic duel that must have been waged by those two iron monsters. Perhaps the shells that finished them had been fired simultaneously, so that neither was left to claim a victory.

It was bankers' hours when we finally pulled off the road, crossed a field and penetrated the mud and bushes of Madeleine Farm. The colonel's orders carried us that far,

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

and nobody could say how long we might expect to stay there. Subsequent events kept us there six days, so that the place became more like a rest-camp than any of our stops before the armistice.

It was in reality not a farm at all, as French farms go. It will always be thought of as no special place two and one-half kilometers southeast of Cunel. Not until several months later, did we hear that those bushes were called Madeleine Farm. We were on a rise of land, covered by a rough space of bushes, and a scrawny grove of trees, the surrounding country was open and rolling. The Germans had built a number of small frame shacks and a couple of square pavilions, which might have been modified forms of beer gardens. Speaking most colloquially the place might have been called a "summer resort," and even in its dilapidated condition, it was a pleasant contrast to the ruins and earthworks we had seen. The real purpose of the establishment was betrayed by a number of long strips of blueprint paper, which were picked up. They were sound-ranging prints. A record of the operation of some Allied gun was given by white lines which ran along smoothly for a space and then went into contortions when the gun fired and again when the shell burst. Thus the time of flight of the projectile was registered and its range discovered when such a record was made from two different stations the range arcs could be plotted and their intersection would be the location of the gun. It is said that the Germans perfected the sound-ranging to such an extent that they could locate a gun within thirty yards.

Tokens were not lacking of a recent housewarming at Madeleine Farm. Parts of the shacks were demolished by shell-fire. One of the larger houses was half blown away, but there was plenty of loose lumber with which to make crude repairs. An American rolling kitchen had been rendered *hors de combat* and abandoned. It was spattered with blood, and in the oven was a man's hand. When a few days of rest had stimulated the ingenuity of our men, they took the iron plates off the side of that grewsome kitchen and used them to make pancakes.

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

We settled down to repeat our previous experience when we waited in reserve before Montfaucon. There were six days of waiting with the constant expectation of orders and and the more than constant arrival of rumors. The grand finale of the war was being waged around us, but the 323d was not destined to fire a gun until the curtain was about to ring down.

The preparations which we made for our accommodation were entirely temporary. At first, it was a case of getting a maximum amount of sleep before ordered to vacate the



FOR THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

property. After the first day, we thought we had been there so long that it was only a question of hours. Most of the men pitched their shelter tents out in an open field, where the ground was the consistency of mush. But they were in full sight of the battery kitchen where nothing was done without their presence being felt. Some of the privileged tribes, like Battalion Detail, found luxurious spots in one of the shacks where the allotment of space was two by six per man.

The mud was the most prominent feature of Madeleine Farm. Not because of the immense and unavoidable quantity, not because it oozed and gurgled and acted like a persistent boot-jack at every step; but, because of the pungent, musty

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

vile stench that emanated therefrom. We have smelled worse smells, and had more awful whiffs, but there was something about that mud which permeated and sickened the sensibilities.

Meantime, the headlong withdrawal of the enemy toward the north, continued. We were back in the S. O. S. as far as shelling from that quarter was concerned. But the crossing of the Meuse at Dun was not yet accomplished, and the Germans still clung to the heights on the east bank. A battery of American "55" rifles was located behind us a few hundred yards away. During the night that battery hurled ear-splitting volleys across the river. Then, when the silence seemed deep in contrast we heard the ominous whir and crash of Boche shells bursting in the vicinity of the bread dump. So, perhaps, the soldier who proclaimed the bread polluted by gas had been honestly mindful of our health.

Then came the day, I think it was November 6th, when we heard that one brigade of the Fifth Division had crossed the river. Dun was occupied and then the heights behind the town. The Germans were withdrawing in earnest. Of course, from that time, no more flower-pots were hurled back and forth from south of Dun, so that we rested in peace. It was on the next day, November 7th, that American troops entered the outskirts of Sedan and cut the Sedan-Merzieres Railroad, which was the principal objective of the entire operation. That great event sealed irredeemably the fate of German arms in France. From that hour, our successes developed so swiftly and the enemy withdrew with such precipitation that division headquarters of the American army were at a loss to keep in touch with their own operations. There was a time when the location of advance units in the line became guess work.

In such a situation, reserves were not called upon, nor was it possible to throw them in where the phases of the action were so insufficiently known. Our regiment was attached to the 32nd Division which was waiting to relieve the 5th, after the crossing of the river had been forced. The difficulties which that crossing might entail were appreciated, and during the stay at Madeleine Farm, our field officers made frequent reconnais-

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

sance for positions covering the river near Dun. They were positions which we were never to occupy. Then there came a change, and the Brigade was given the broad designation of "Pursuit Brigade." By the way the Germans were going that meant that we would have to "gird up our loins." This Colonel Hopkins proceeded to do. Battery B was declared immobilized, and when the pursuit started that battery would have to remain behind and take care of the sick horses. Thus we got rid of unserviceable beasts by transfer, and the motive power of B was apportioned off to the rest of the regiment.

The main road toward the north, passed within fifty yards of our camp. Over it the rush of traffic which backed up the sweeping army, passed night and day. There was no longer any time nor necessity for confining travel to the dark hours. The bulk of the traffic was motor trucks loaded with rations and munitions. Those which carried corn-willy and hard-tack were piled up until the canvas tops bulged. The trucks with shells always looked empty in comparison, because their load was too heavy and too delicate to permit more than a couple of layers of boxes. Between those truck trains, the small fry passed in rapid succession. Ambulances, motorcycles, small cars of colonels, large cars of generals, K. of C. flivers and occasionally a Y. M. C. A. ditto. Our horses looked out from their picket line in the bushes and thought they wouldn't have a look in on such a road. The rumors which sprung from that motley traffic, were as varied as their source. We heard all things, imagined all things, and believed some things. The result was, that on November 5th, there was considerable betting in the command on whether or not we would ever fire another shot.

One afternoon, one of the men accumulated enough surplus energy to walk to Cunel, $2\frac{1}{2}$ kilometers away. The town was sufficiently demolished to satisfy even a barbarian constitution; but there were buildings standing in happy contrast to some of the towns which had vanished except for strewn debris. Here was an interesting church, the interior of which, had been robbed, burned and destroyed. The Huns had added insult to sacrilege and used the church for a movie show. There was a sign "Kino" over the door and

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

part of a German poster beside it. The Red Cross flag, which the Americans had erected on the church was emblematic of the restoration, which was taking place in that outraged land. A glance through the door gave an impression of many white cots, in the midst of broken cold stone walls.

An armistice commission had actually been appointed and was even then, on its way to confer with Marshal Foch. It was presumed that they would pass the lines somewhere



Potter

Staub

Aley

Sommers

"LEST AULD ACQUAINTANCE BE FORGOT"

in our vicinity. But the next day, November 8th, a curious thing happened. It taught us that we were more credulous than sensible, but it entirely cured us of any idea which prevailed, that a cessation of fighting was near. All day the appetite for reliable news had been growing, and because we were in ignorance of what to expect, the suspense was even more intense. Major Fibich and the members of his battalion party had gone north on a reconnaissance, during the afternoon. If it was true that the enemy had run away

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

from the fight, we would soon know about it from the major. When it got dark, we took the usual precautions against letting the light of our candles shine outdoors. Therefore, the scenes on the road were shut out by shelter-halves, paulins and the walls of the cottages. Suddenly, a shout was heard from the direction of the road, and it was followed by a whoop and a holler. Somebody stuck their head into the room and said that the armistice had been signed. Authority for such a radical statement was that of the military policeman on the road, reliable liars! They claimed that all vehicles on the road were then and there permitted and ordered to display a light. That was easily verified. We looked out, and sure enough the road was a long and winding line of lights. It looked like the road from New Haven to Bridgeport on the evening after a big game. It was the first time that such a bold, unusual sight had ever been seen on the Western Front. In the face of that proof the 323d Regiment of Field Artillery proceeded to believe that the armistice was signed; but the guns which had not been silent for four years were not silent then. We heard the roar of artillery distinctly, and saw the usual signal rockets and flares. An extra edition of rumors was issued from the road to explain the apparent disinclination of the front lines to cease firing. Major so-and-so on the front seat of an ambulance was just back from Stenay where he had seen the guns pointed into the air. A great celebration of shooting guns and fireworks was going on. Then we had a very splendid half-hour, when we smoked cigars and hoped for something official on the subject. When Major Fibich came back from his reconnaissance, there was a clamor for first hand information. Our hopes received quite a jolt. He had left the vicinity of Dun-sur-Meuse about four o'clock, and the fight was still on. He couldn't understand why they called it an armistice when there were American soldiers up there being shot to pieces. The lights on the road were an extraordinary development, still unexplained. What was a man to think?

Sometime after that unhappy mistake of November 8th, we learned that the news of an armistice was published in

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

America and that the whole country celebrated the false report on the same date. It would be an interesting discovery to know just what relation, if any, existed between the news which gladdened the hearts of Americans along the Meuse River, and the report which electrified their homes across the ocean. It is probable that the simultaneous occurrence of the two large scale disappointments was a vicious coincidence. The dispatch from Admiral Wilson which was the source of the report in America could probably not have bounded over official wires and been caught up so innocently along the Meuse. It would have received official recognition and been denied long before it could reach the troops along that remote road. The lighting of the road on that night was the cause and proof of what was said. Such a radical departure was authorized for a portion of the road only. It was one of the strenuous measures which were taken at the end to expedite the movement of our troops in their final victorious pursuit of the retreating foe.

On the afternoon of November 9th, the 32nd Division, which had been waiting impatiently in reserve, received orders to move and with it, the 158th Brigade. The field which we had been occupying was nothing short of a bog after the heavy rains. Fortunately it was higher than the road, so that the materiel, wagons, and kitchens were able to splash their way down hill without much trouble. Once on the road, there was no delay. We struck northward on a hard stone surface that ran like a black ribbon through the rolling water-soaked country. It was just dark when we cleared the first rise beyond Madeleine Farm. Looking back, the sky was lighted by a red glow. An officer who stayed behind until the last, told us later that the shack occupied by the officers of Battery F, and the one next door had burned up. We have always felt sure that the cause of the fire was a defective flue—for some of our last days had been spent in building a fireplace and chimney deluxe out of the bricks which lay around. The incident was a small but sentimental one in that ravaged country.

The dusk faded into a dark gray mist which in turn was gradually absorbed by a cold, clear night. The first stop

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

which arose from some unknown cause at the head of the long column found us on a bend of the road at the entrance to Cunel. A congestion of trucks in the town ahead, gave it the complexion of a long halt, and Captain Dempsey ordered the kitchen to serve supper, which was in progress when the command to "move forward immediately" was received. Beyond Cunel there began that series of halts, which made the last march of the war seem the most trying one of all. We were still eight kilometers from Dun-sur-Meuse and, although, as always, our destination was unknown, it was a fair guess that we would cross the river at that place. Such proved to be the case, but only after those eight kilometers had been accomplished by an exasperating series of a few yards progress, between countless halts. The entire brigade was on the road with the 324th heavies in the lead as usual. It didn't seem possible even for the 324th would have a horse down or a wheel off every two minutes. The 32nd Division was on the move and we envied the rapid progress which the long files of doughboys made as they passed us who were the lame and halt, chiefly halt. At four corners, we turned sharply toward the east, and just then the word was passed along quickly to put out all cigarettes. There was a whirring close overhead, which seemed to hang there while our tense feelings urged it to move on. Even against the starry sky, not a trace of the plane was visible; only the ominous hum of its motor could be heard. Then there was a flash and an explosion on our right, followed by several more behind us. Doubtless the target was the crossroads we had just passed. That was the first time that the regiment had been bombed while on the march. There were no disastrous results. Probably the actual populated condition of the road was as obscure to the airman as his machine was to us. It was surprising that the bombs did not create a greater explosion. They were evidently small-sized, and their effect was no greater than that of a shell from a "77."

In Ancreville, we stopped near a building where Lieutenant Johnson, formerly of the 323rd, was engaged in work with division headquarters. There was plenty of time for a visit. At the rate the batteries were moving, there would

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

have been time for a shampoo and a haircut. Johnson had maps showing the latest information about the front lines. The German army was still intact and we had a day and night job to defeat it. Indeed, any trace of thought which might have existed concerning an armistice had been blown into fragments by the bombs ten minutes before.

From Ancreville, the road led down hill along one side of a broad, deep valley. There was evidence that the route had once been a picturesque French highway. Characteristic, straight rows of trees bordered the road, or rather half of them did. The Huns had cut down many and left only the stumps. Near the foot of the grade was the town of Doullon. The exhilarating glimpse of buildings standing almost intact showed how precipitately the tide of battle had twice rushed over that area.

Since we had halted every 100 yards on the way to Doullon, it was no wonder that we also halted in the town. Somebody mentioned the name of the place, but that added nothing to the knowledge or absence of knowledge of our whereabouts. As usual, the outlook on geography was confined between the back of the carriage in front and the heads of the horses in the rear. The night was getting extremely cold and it was necessary to stamp up and down on the road to keep up a reminiscence of circulation in toes that were nearly frozen. There was a railroad a few steps ahead and across that lay the explanation of the unfortunate jerks by which our portion of the column had arrived there. The road led on to a newly built bridge over which a guard was permitting only three vehicles to pass at one time. Each time that three teams went ahead the whole column moved up so as to bring the next carriages to the starting point. The procedure must have been going on for hours in order to get the entire brigade across, and with Battery F the last in line, it is no wonder we started the hesitation waltz back as far as Cunel.

The bridge, which had been built under shell fire, was a splendid tribute to the efficiency of American engineers. The river at that point divided and flowed around a steep island which was outlined against the sky by tall trees and a handsome stone building. At first we wondered if that really

was the Meuse, there seemed to be so little water in the dark river bed; but beyond the island the second installment of that magical bridge spanned a deep, swiftly rushing river. On the far side, we entered the substantial town of Dun-sur-Meuse.

The crossing of the Meuse at that point was the fulfillment of what had long been the ambition and resolute purpose of the First Army operating under Lieutenant-General Hunter Liggett. It was an event of the greatest importance from the point of view of military strategy. The movement flanked and almost surrounded the enemy forces which occupied the strongholds north of Verdun in the vicinity of the Grande Montagne. All that country was therefore liberated at a stroke without the prolonged and bloody assaults which would have been necessary to drive the enemy back by frontal operation. But the results were more far-reaching than that, for with an army operating east of the Meuse the Sedan-Longuyon railroad could no longer be of use to the enemy, and with that artery of supply cut they must necessarily withdraw from northeastern France. Such a withdrawal had begun, when the high command designated certain units, the 32nd Division among them, as pursuit units. It was the purpose to catch and destroy the German army before it had time to escape intact beyond the frontier. The operation was planned and strenuously pushed without, of course, the slightest consideration of the fact that German delegates were even then conferring with Marshal Foch to bring about an armistice.

The picture at Dun-sur-Meuse on the night of Nov. 9th was in keeping with the significance of the occasion. The river looked very small as it wound a swift course between the heights of the surrounding country. Toward the west the land ascended gradually, but several miles back from the river, the rolling farm lands rose to a considerable height above the valley. All that night, the unending columns of infantry, machine guns and artillery descended slowly but surely, the several roads which converged at the little white bridge at the bottom. And the bridge was white even on that moonless night because a heavy frost outlined every timber. The town of Dun nestled on a narrow ledge between the river and a steep cliff which rose up abruptly, dominating the town and all the surrounding coun-

try. In Dun, the slender line of countless soldiers turned to the right and started their gradual ascent into the highland region of northern France. It was like a triumphal entry into a new country.

When the men saw the overshadowing cliff, there were many expressions of surprise that such a place could ever have been wrested from the hands of even a half-hearted foe. But the secret of the silence which those high shadows preserved while the army marched beneath them, was to be found further north. It was the crossing in the vicinity of Stenay which had forced the Germans to withdraw from the heights back of Dun.

The bridge was crossed about midnight, but it seemed later. The unsteady gait had worn out both horses and men. We turned south and started to climb up the face of the hills which overlooked the river. The job of urging the heavily loaded carriages to the top seemed formidable under the circumstances. But situated at the summit of that three-kilometer grade was the town of Liny, where it was understood the regiment would halt for the remainder of the night. Encouraged by that thought, the drivers kept their horses in the harness and we proceeded.

The air became more bitterly cold at every step. Each man who was not taking a turn on the teams stamped along on foot, and did everything possible to encourage the circulation not to fail. After an interminable effort, Liny was reached. The houses were dark and desolate, but they held distinct attractions when viewed from the exposed road. Alas, if the intention ever existed that we should tarry it was changed by events of the night. We pushed through the town without a pause, even accelerating the gait with the assistance of a level stretch in the road. On the far edge of Liny, the ascent was steeper than ever. The forlorn horses stopped many times without the slightest persuasion, and started again only after the most strenuous punishment. Here and there along the road were vehicles which had fallen out of their place in the column. They were pulled or rather not pulled, by horses which refused to take another step, undoubtedly members of the "no oats, no work" gang. The most conspicuous in point

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

of size was a huge overloaded park chariot. It was piled higher than a house with equipment of the 324th heavies. The six horses undergoing punishment plunged around in a most helpless manner, and manoeuvred athwart the road so as to leave us the smallest possible loophole for slipping by. The most conspicuous delinquent in point of noise was the ration cart of Battery E whose one lone horse was being told in unmistakable terms just where to go and just what the driver thought of him.

When the top of the ridge was reached, we inclined to the east and left the vicinity of the river. The road entered a deep narrow valley and there around us was a strange sight. Camp fires dotted with points of light, the dark hills on both sides of the valley. It was the first time that the "watchfires of a thousand circling camps" had been seen at the front. We looked on it with increased surprise having in mind the bombs which had been dropped earlier in the night. But even as we looked some official, who was either more warm blooded or more cautious than the others must have arrived because a voice bellowed in the distance, "all fires out immediately." Then we passed the guns and caissons of the "heavies" parked beside the road. It was their bivouacks which occupied the valley. They were in the act of unhitching their horses and created a nice mess by trying to lead them to water against our column.

The fact that part of the brigade had halted, was a fair indication that the long cold hours of the dreary night were nearly ended. Just how far we had come was a question that would have stumped the warmest participant. It was so far that the night's performance had proved beyond doubt the proposition that man and stupid horses do not play out, but that they have a reserve strength which can carry them always a little farther. The gray light of early morning was just creeping over the country when we pulled into a field of weeds and shell holes. The command was given "unhitch—feed oats."

It was half past five on the morning of November 10th, they told us to be ready to march again at seven o'clock. The most vital concern of all was not sleep, nobody ex-

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

pected anything like that, but it was the corn-willy and coffee which the cooks were exceedingly busy preparing. The advent of daylight eliminated any objection to fires and no time was lost in reducing an old wooden shed to a condition of fuel. Then the early sun slanted through the valley and began to dispose of the white frost. Things began to look up.

We took our bearings in a hazy sort of way, but got no further than that the regiment was halted in a hollow between rough hill-sides. The dirt road and a straggling orchard beyond made it appear more like a corner of good old Connecticut than any landscape in France. To be sure, there was a German narrow gauge railroad and plenty of shell holes, but nature had covered up those tokens of the first Hun invasion with weeds and grass. And then came the doughboys, who had not been seen since the bridge at Dun had been crossed, so long ago. They streamed by, a whole regiment in single file, and with them were the company burros pulling two wheeled carts containing rifle ammunition. It was just such a picture as has often been seen near the training camps in America. When the infantry with full pack and rifle have gone out over the hills for manoeuvres under an early morning sun. Only there was a difference for these men were more rugged and more solemn and their clothes and steel helmets were stained with the mud of stinking trenches. They had a great work to do in the next 24 hours and for some of them the final sacrifice lay just over the hill where the enemy had turned at bay. But of all that we knew nothing while waiting for a chance to take the road.

It was ten o'clock before our turn came to advance with the rest of the division. And then for a change, the light regiment preceded the 324th. Signs of the rapid and recent withdrawal of the Germans were not lacking. Dead horses frequently offended the olfactory nerve, but for the most part they had been carved for juicy steaks and only the bones were left. Occasionally long flights of steps ran up the hillside on the left to gun emplacements at the top. Those steps were well built and even had railings just like

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

national parks might build for an easy approach to some fine outlook for tourists. About noon a stop was made to water the horses in Haraumont. The name of the town was familiar, and we knew immediately where we were. After a circuitous march of a hundred kilometers and nearly two weeks' time we had arrived back again almost at the starting point. Brabant Hill and Death Valley lay eight kilometers to the south and the very spot on which we were engaged in peacefully watering the horses, had been a target for our own concentration fire in the enemy's back area two weeks before. The discovery stimulated everybody's curiosity. We were eager to see the sights and know the secrets of the country which had been the direct object of our efforts. It was like a glimpse behind the scenes, so rapidly had circumstances changed to bring us there.

On the bare plateau which stretched away to the east from Haraumont, the Huns had begun the preparation of the third and most formidable line in the great Kriemhilde defense system. Big trenches, with here and there a concrete "pill-box", were left half built. The unfinished defenses were marked by stakes or partly excavated trenches. Extensive barbed wire entanglements had been under construction but the enemy had run away and left huge coils of brand new wire. The road by which we traveled the length of the plateau in full view of all the world was also part of the improved system. It had been ditched and drained preparatory to make of it a military asset and the far end had in fact been macadamized into as fine a road as any in France. The most inspiring sight was the light batteries, which had been captured "in toto," the guns were left peeking out of their emplacements, and undoubtedly still trained on the position of Battery F at Brabant. What wouldn't we have given to know their location two weeks before! Shell craters, large and small, were sprinkled around although the ground was by no means a sieve like some we had seen. It was a point of controversy just which battery of the 2nd Battalion could claim the credit for those shell holes which were nearest to the "77" batteries. The whole spectacle of construction so suddenly abandoned surely proved that the German army was not without some

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

resources nor without the intention to employ those resources with efficiency. It strengthens the contention that superior military strategy and power of the Allies was after all the vital factor in the German defeat.

Those rays of the sun which still penetrated the gathering mists slanted from the west by the time the far end of the plateau was reached. Then the road wound down a steep descent into a beautifully wooded valley. Far below in the bottom of the valley lay the town of Ecurey. From that distance it appeared untouched by the ravages of war, and the houses which gathered around the ubiquitous church might to all appearances have been inhabited by townsfolk in the quiet pursuits of peace. We were told by an officer of the brigade staff that Ecurey was our destination for that day, and that the regiment would wait there in reserve for a short time. The fact that it might be our final destination for the World War was a suspicion as remote as that the peaceful village would presently be the scene of a violent bombardment. The column came to a halt with the head of the brigade at the bottom of the steep descent and the rest of it twisting up behind like the coils of a big snake. We waited that way for a long time, so it seemed. Something had gone wrong, else why did they keep us from the resting place while the sun was sinking behind the brow of the hills? The picture of that halt is recalled very clearly. Our carriages were drawn up on the outer edge of the road, with only a wooden railing separating them from the tree-clad hillside which dropped away almost perpendicularly. On the opposite side was a crumbling stone cliff, where the hill had been cut away to build the road. Part of the battery above was hidden by a protruding shoulder of the hill and then it reappeared and the fourgon which brought up the rear could be seen just above where the road doubled on itself. But the circumstance which stands out above all others is the recollection that as we waited there beside the road, the more we thought of horse-steaks and boot-stew, the more palatable the idea became. One meal of coffee and willy was a minimum for preservation during the last twenty-four hours of exertion and when a French rolling kitchen passed up along the line,

it was one too much. Hand-outs were requested in starved and pleading tones and the good natured Frenchmen complied by filling with hot soup the cups that were passed up to them. Although their horses were pulling at a lively gait, there wasn't a drop of soup left for the "frogs" by the time they got to the top of the hill; it had been given away to a needy cause. That diversion put us in mind of something to eat more than ever, and the way a man can feel hungry is something awful.

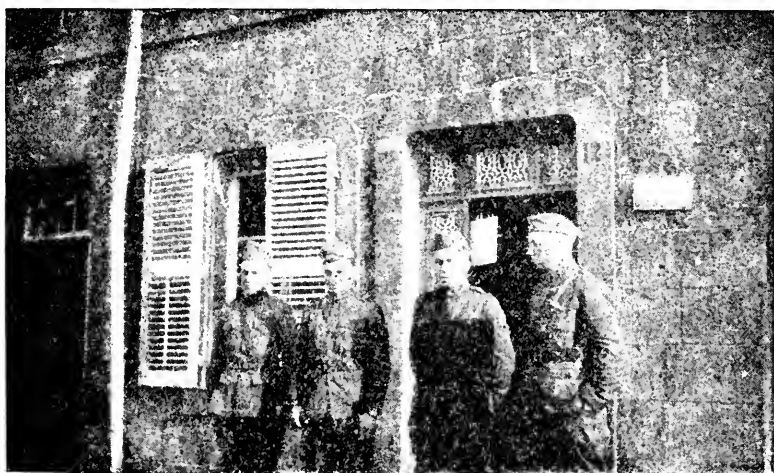
And then, while we hemmed and hawed on that road above Ecurey, all of a sudden the curtain went up for the climax. It came without warning but not a whit more sudden than the way in which it ended the next morning, Nov. 11th. Somebody was in the middle of a sentence, when—whirr, swish, swish, swish—CRASH! *Wheec!!!* It had landed on the hill below us. And then came another and another. It was great to have the protection of that rocky wall across the road, but it was an awful disappointment to see that the Huns had planned an evening's entertainment for us in Ecurey.

Things moved rapidly from that moment. Reflections were cut short by the arrival of a messenger with orders that the firing batteries of the Three Twenty-Third would proceed forward with all haste on the left of the road, where there was free passage. At the same time it was stated that an enemy counter-attack had driven our own lines back four kilometers.

Later, inquiries showed that the estimated distance of four kilometers was a slight exaggeration. It was however, true that our infantry were attacked near Ecurey and driven back late in the afternoon of Nov. 10th. The American advance had been so rapid that it had outstripped the artillery support. Advance detachments of the Fifth Division found themselves dangerously isolated, in their attempts to keep contact with the enemy. It was to support that thin front line and to continue the offensive on the right flank of the tired-out Fifth that the 32nd had made the forced march of the preceding twenty-four hours. The enemy after withdrawing from the heights around Haraumont, had crossed the rolling valley beyond Ecurey and established himself on a ridge of hills, six kilometers east of that town. His artillery, although reduced in quantity by the retreat, was still formid-

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

able and from new positions on the hills to the east, it was able to cover the entire valley at the entrance to which Ecurey was situated. The Thirty-second Division poured into that valley in broad daylight. The infantry, exulting in the open warfare for which American temperament was so well adapted, pushed ahead leaving the artillery behind. It was then, that the Germans attacked, and before our lines could be consolidated severe losses were suffered. The spectacle of the wounded being evacuated the next day along an open road after the guns were silent, was a sad one indeed.



Dempsey Platt Holtz Breese

ECUREY (Nov. 11, 1918)

There was not the slightest indication that the appeal for immediate artillery action was to be the final tragic scene in the world's hideous drama. We undertook it with the idea that the war was going stronger than ever. The fourgon which carried maps and orienting equipment, was summoned from the rear of the battery; guns and caissons were pulled out of their places in the column and we advanced as rapidly as the steep grade would permit.

The main street of Ecurey was swarming with newly arrived troops of Engineers, infantry, and headquarters detachments. The fact that division and brigade had intended

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

to locate their headquarters in the town, showed how unexpected was the attack which at that moment was heaving G. I. cans into our midst. The air was growing misty and observation was impossible which accounted for the fact that the enemy could not observe his bursts and correct the range. The results would have been disastrous in that seething town. We stopped for a few moments and at the same time, there was a pause in the bombardment, which was going over our heads. It was the calm before the storm. The next minute there was a rush through the air, and a tremendous smashing and crashing just to the left. This new outburst was of the "77" variety. The range was correct but the direction was a little wrong because the shells were harmlessly tearing up an orchard and a meadow situated at the northeast corner of town. The bombardment was violent and sufficiently close to be disconcerting. In the midst of the din and shrieking, Major-General Haan, who commanded the Division, rode by wearing a cloth barrack cap as a dignified emblem of his rank, while everybody else felt like snuggling up under their steel helmets. To be sure, the General did employ spurs on his horse to good advantage which caused him to set off at a handy clip.

Major Baldwin, First Battalion commander, looked much concerned. He kept glancing over to where the dirt was flying in the orchard, while he rode along the column as if to bid us all farewell. When asked where our positions were, the Major pointed toward the corner of the town, and stated that we had no choice; our positions must be in that orchard and its vicinity. At least there would be no trouble to find depressions for the trail spades—crash!—number one piece was all fixed up, and smash! bang! there were trail holes enough for all the regiment. We proceeded straight through town, and near the further end, a road ran off to the left toward Lissey where it was seen to pass right by our orchard. We turned on that road, which was lucky, because an M. P. at the corner said the shells were falling just ahead. It was a choice between Scylla and Charybdis, and we were constrained by orders to choose the spot where there was the most shelling.

But "the Lord had the regiment by the hand" and we were no sooner headed straight for that fateful field than the bom-

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

bardment suddenly ceased. The Boche who had lived there four years knew the ground far better than we, and he must have shelled the orchard on well founded suspicions. But without observation he could not see the object of his hate slip in just after the punishment has ceased.

When we turned off the road to take up position, it was like creeping on thin ice. Nothing was more certain than that a battery of "77" was at that moment so adjusted that it could heave up craters under our feet without the slightest warning, and blow off our heads in the process. The fact created a feeling of suspense, to say the least.

With a consciousness of treading on forbidden ground, Battery F pulled up into the forward edge of the orchard. There were a few flimsy shacks and outhouses and it was a matter of the most careful driving to manipulate six horses so as to bring each gun to its place. Then came the command "action right." This was open warfare in its purest form and would have brought joy to the hearts of Fort Sill instructors. Had they not predicted that open methods would ultimately solve the Kriemhilde riddle? The manœuver in question would hardly serve as a model because it was finished with the guns ten meters apart. A nice little bunched-up target for the elimination of which the Huns would need only two well placed shells. That was contrary to all the principles, even for a decoy battery which it looked as though we were intended to be. But we were so placed by higher orders.

Darkness marked the end of the attack which demanded our fire. The mist which had been so much to our advantage lay heavily over the face of the country, but overhead the sky was clear. A bright star could be seen above the enemy positions, and it was by means of that star, and the needle of the goniometer that the guns were layed for direction. A man was then left on the alert at each gun which is an invariable rule especially when the situation is so precarious as it was that night. The rest of the cannoncers found shelter on the floor of one of those structures which I have dignified by the name of shacks. The officers and instrument details of Batteries E and F shared together a room in the farmhouse which

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

lay on the edge of Ecurey, only a hundred yards from the guns. It was the eve of the greatest day in history but out there on that chilled and solemn line there was nothing to awaken any suspicion of what the morrow had in store.

The question of supper, which had been forgotten in the excitement, had increased in importance ten fold, since the halt in the afternoon. The kitchen was doing business more than a kilometer away on the far side of the town. A detail was sent back but what they found in the way of eats and at what time they returned with the same will have to be told by someone who stayed awake.

It was the morning of November 11th. Few, if any of those who held the suburbs of Ecurey knew or cared what morning it was. The wee hours had passed and dawn was about to be announced by its herald, the cock, or more accurately by his successor for four years, the cockroach. We were only conscious of that sublime moment by virtue of being rudely shaken and exhorted to get busy. There was no hesitation, habit made the response mechanical. A messenger from battalion headquarters called on all the guns of the regiment to open up with a barrage to accompany an attack which would start at 7 o'clock. The map co-ordinates were given to designate the location for the barrage.

Facilities for the work were not so handy in that trash-filled room as in the little dugout on Brabant Hill. First a stub of a candle, then a pencil, map ruler, protractor and orienting board were assembled on the floor, and the work commenced. It is much better to stay up all night on a barrage than to be summoned from sleep and immediately try to concentrate the scattered senses on the acute computation of a problem. But that morning, the demands of an emergency assisted momentum and at ten minutes before seven the data were being passed over the wire. "From present laying right twenty, open eight, four rounds sweeping, shell, normal, short fuse, ten degrees forty-two minutes."

When the action began, it was immediately answered. We received four shells for every one. The duel was at short range and the hot iron shrieked and crashed among us like swift bolts of lightning. There was not a second to lose. So

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

long as our guns could fire they must do so on schedule time. The room in which we worked and the window which faced the enemy must have been the center of impact for those Boche gunners. It was never struck although the shells that would have gone through it like paper rained over the whole vicinity. One swooped into a barn behind where it wounded two men and killed three horses. They blew up the house across the street—a very narrow street; and dirt from the orchard flew in at the window. What idiot ever said there would be an armistice! But the operator in the corner was trying to hear something in his telephone receiver. It sounded like “cease firing;” such a thing had never happened before in the midst of a creeping barrage. What would become of the infantry? But the man repeated “CEASE FIRING.” Those who were working on the schedules seized the opportunity to catch up. The operator tried to call the batteries but the lines were shot out. Somebody shouted out the window to cease firing and somebody else ran out the door to give the same command. Our guns were suddenly tamed but the cessation was not mutual. For a time, the sharp hate burst over Ecurey; and cooled off only gradually just as the hot tubes of the “75’s” were cooling.

The transition out of hell was too abrupt to be easily comprehended. It was some time and after many skeptical expressions before the truth was realized. Attempts were made to complete the schedules that would never be required. Lieutenant Middleton representing the special extra edition of the morning paper entered the room and announced that it was said that the armistice had been signed. He would not shoulder the responsibility for such momentous news. A little later it was passed from mouth to mouth that the signal corps was wirelessing to all the front that the armistice was signed. We began to babble at that. By nine o’clock, the proposition was fully accepted when some Frenchmen on the hill said that Marshal Foch had actually called for a cessation of hostilities at 11 o’clock.

There was no confetti, helmet tossing, nor cutting of capers. We felt dazed with a satisfying, comfortable bewilderment. A cold, thick mist shut off the surrounding country, and

in that mist the men who had unburdened their great strain, built themselves bonfires and went to sleep. All firing in the vicinity had ceased, but now and then a gun went off from the French batteries on the hill. It was the privilege of those who had fought the Hun before us to send to him the final tokens.

RUTHERFORD H. PLATT, JR.

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

17° Corps d'Armee
Artillerie

ORDRE DE LA BRIGADE

Le General GASCOUIN, Commandant l'Artillerie due 17°
Corps d'Armee, cite a l'ordre de la Brigade.

Soldat de I ere classe JAMES C. WALKER.

"Au fait preuve d'un grand courage, en allant comme volontaire, pour ravitailler la compagnie, ce qui necessitait un parcours de 300 meters sous un bombardement intense, pres de BRABANT S/Meuse 27 Octobre et 29 Octobre, 1918.

Le 31 Octobre, 1918.

Gascouin.

LE GENERAL GASCOUIN, Commandant,
l'Artillerie du 17° Corps d'Armee.

158 F. A. BRIGADE, A. E. F.

General Order,
No. 53.

12th December, 1918.

1. In the period of less than three months that has elapsed since the Brigade has left its training camp for the front it has traversed France; fought in four divisions and three corps; borne its full share of the great offensive, first west of the Meuse, then north of Verdun, then again west of the Meuse, which it once more crossed in pursuit of the vanquished enemy.

And on every occasion the guns of the Brigade have responded fully to all the needs of the infantry. This has been rendered possible only by the untiring labor and the devotion of its personnel, both commissioned and enlisted.

2. Since the signing of the armistice the Brigade has marched through part of Belgium, crossed Luxembourg and all of Germany west of the Rhine. During the march to the Rhine there has been a marked and constant improvement in the march discipline and march efficiency of the units of the Brigade. The conditions under which this march was under-

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

taken and has been conducted have afforded no adequate opportunity for the re-equipment of troops; yet by their continued efforts the organizations of the Brigade have done much to rehabilitate their war-worn equipment.

3. The Brigade Commander, who is surely its severest critic, feels great pride in these achievements of the Brigade, and congratulates all officers and men, who have contributed to them, on the results obtained.

4. The high standard which has been insisted upon by the Brigade Commander is within reach, but the price of its attainment and maintenance is unceasing and unremitting efforts by every member of the Brigade.

By Command of Brigadier General Fleming.

S. R. HOPKINS,
Lieut.-Col. F. A. Adjutant.

158th F. A. BRIGADE, A. E. F.

General Order

No. 54

13th December, 1918.

I. The following letter has been received:

HEADQUARTERS THIRTY-SECOND DIVISION
AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCES.

Bassenheim, Germany

11 December, 1918.

From Commanding General, 32nd Division, American E. F.

To Commanding General, 158th Field Artillery Brigade.

Subject: Commendation.

1. I have noted, especially during the latter part of the march of your Brigade to the Rhine, the excellent march discipline maintained by the Brigade. This excellence has also been commented upon by various officers of the Corps and Army. I request that you express to the officers of the Brigade my appreciation of the good work thus done.

2. It has likewise been my impression that the animals of the Brigade have been well cared for during the march,

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

and that they begin to show signs of improvement in condition.

3. It now devolves upon the Brigade to improve the appearance of material and equipment of all kinds and of the clothing and equipment of the men.

Signed: WM. LASSITER,
Major General, U. S. Army.

II. It is with much gratification that the Brigade Commander has received for the Brigade, the commendation of the Division Commander as expressed in paragraphs 1 and 2 of the above letter, and it is with keen pleasure that he transmits them to the officers of the Brigade, who have so well merited them by arduous and effective work.

III. While not unmindful of the marked improvement that has been made in the appearance of material, equipment and clothing—all of which have been subjected to the wear and tear of months of warfare—in fact because of this very improvement, the Brigade Commander calls for increased efforts by all officers and enlisted men, in order that the expectations of the Division Commander, expressed in paragraph 3 of the above letter may be fully realized.

By Command of BRIGADIER-GENERAL FLEMING.

G. H. Q.

AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCES

General Order

No. 232

France, December 19, 1918.

It is with a sense of gratitude for its splendid accomplishment, which will live through all history, that I record in General Orders a tribute to the victory of the First Army in the Meuse-Argonne battle.

Tested and strengthened by the reduction of the St. Mihiel salient, for more than six weeks you battered against the pivot of the enemy line on the Western Front. It was a position of imposing natural strength, stretching on both sides of the Meuse River from the bitterly contested hills of Verdun to the almost impenetrable forest of the Argonne; a position, moreover, fortified by four years of labor designed to render it impregnable; a position held with the fullest resources of

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

the enemy. That position you broke utterly, and thereby hastened the collapse of the enemy's military power.

Soldiers of all of the divisions engaged under the First, Third and Fifth American Corps and the Second Colonial and Seventeenth French Corps—the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 26th, 28th, 29th, 32nd, 33rd, 35th, 37th, 42nd, 77th, 78th, 79th, 80th, 81st, 82nd, 89th, 90th and 91st American divisions, the 18th and 26th French divisions, and the 10th and 15th French Colonial divisions—you will be long remembered for the stubborn persistence of your progress, your storming of obstinately defended machine gun nests, your penetration, yard by yard, of woods and ravines, your heroic resistance in the face of counterattacks supported by powerful artillery fire. For more than a month from the initial attack of September 26th, you fought your way slowly through the Argonne, through the woods and over the hills west of the Meuse; you slowly enlarged your hold on the Cotes de Meuse to the east, and then, on the 1st of November your attack forced the enemy into flight. Pressing its retreat, you cleared the entire left bank of the Meuse south of Sedan, and then stormed the heights on the right bank and drove him into the plain beyond.

Soldiers of all army and corps troops engaged—to you no less credit is due; your steadfast adherence to duty and your dogged determination in the face of all obstacles made possible the heroic deeds cited above.

The achievement of the First Army which is scarcely to be equalled in American history, must remain a source of proud satisfaction to the troops who participated in the last campaign of the war. The American people will remember it as the realization of the hitherto potential strength of the American contribution toward the cause to which they had sworn allegiance. There can be no greater reward for a soldier or for a soldier's memory.

This order will be read to all organizations at the first assembly formation after its receipt.

JOHN J. PERSHING,
General Commander-in-Chief
American Expeditionary Forces.

Official:

Robert C. Davis, Adjutant General.

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

158TH F. A. BRIGADE

A. E. F.

General Order
No. 17

15th March, 1919.

1. The Commanding General of the Third Army Corps, Major General Hines has directed the Brigade Commander to convey to the commanding officers, officers and men of the 158th F. A. Brigade, his congratulations upon the splendid appearance presented by the Brigade in today's review and inspection before the Commander-in-Chief, General John J. Pershing. He has also directed me to convey his appreciation of the splendid spirit which has enabled the Brigade to accomplish such gratifying results under the present conditions.

2. In conveying these sentiments of the Commanding General Third Army Corps to the officers and men of this Brigade, the Brigade Commander desires to express his profound gratitude for the willing spirit of co-operation and overcoming of difficulties which has characterized this Brigade from its inception, and it is a matter of great pride to him to feel that he has the honor of organizing a brigade capable of winning such commendation from the Corps Commander.

3. The Brigade Commander directs that this order be published to every officer and man of this Brigade in order that they may feel that their efforts toward making the best brigade possible has won such commendation from such military authority as the Corps Commander.

By Order of Colonel Ashburn: S. R. HOPKINS,
Lieut.-Col. F. A., Adjutant.

HEADQUARTERS THIRTY-SECOND DIVISION,
AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCES.

Rengsdorf, Germany.

General Order
No. 18

16th March, 1919.

1. It is a great pleasure to the Division Commander to inform the Division that the Commander-in-Chief commended most highly the fine and soldierly appearance made by the Divisions at the review and inspection yesterday.

The Corps Commander and visiting officers likewise com-

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

plimented the Division in strong terms. There was not a discordant note; each corps and arm of service came up to the high standard set for it.

The Division Commander expresses his appreciation of the excellent way in which officers and men rose to this occasion, and he congratulates the Division on once more meeting the expectations of those who have watched its career in France and Germany.

By Command of Major-General Lassiter:

R. M. BECK, JR.,
Colonel, General Staff, Chief of Staff.

HEADQUARTERS THIRTY-SECOND DIVISION,
AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCES.

201. 1 (Commendations).

From: Commanding General, 32nd Division, American E. F.

To: Commanding Officer, 158th F. A. Brigade, American E. F.

Subject: Commendation.

1. A general order issues today from division headquarters informing the division of the high commendation which the Commander-in-Chief passed upon the division as a result of his review and inspection of yesterday.

I wish, however, to express to you in this more personal way my very high appreciation of the fine spirit which so obviously animated the troops under your command. The 322d Field Artillery, the 323d Field Artillery and the 324th Field Artillery, in their soldierly bearing, in the appearance of the mounts, of their tractors and of their equipment generally, made a showing of which they may well be proud. The light regiments in passing in review stirred to enthusiasm all who watched them. The 324th Regiment reached all the expectations of the Commander-in-Chief and of the Division Commander in that so soon after being motorized and under such unfavorable conditions they had their tractors and guns on the reviewing ground ready for inspection and brought to such a high standard of cleanliness and obvious efficiency.

Signed: WM. LASSITER,
Major General, U. S. Army.

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

HEADQUARTERS THIRTY-SECOND DIVISION,
AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCES.

Rengsdorf, Germany.

24th March, 1919.

General Order
No. 22.

The following letter is published for the information of all concerned:

ARMY OF OCCUPATION
THIRD U. S. ARMY

OFFICE CHIEF OF STAFF.

Coblenz, Germany, March 19th, 1919.

From: Chief of Staff, Third Army, American E. F.

To: Commanding General, Third Army Corps, American E. F.

Subject: Commendation.

1. The Army Commander desires me to congratulate the Commanding General of the Third Corps on the very satisfactory condition of the Third Corps troops and the Divisions of the Corps during the recent inspection of the Commander-in-Chief.

2. The condition of your troops voices far more strongly than can be accomplished by any other means, the intelligent and successful labor which has been expended by all concerned in training and instruction since the occupation of the bridgehead.

By command of Major General Dickman.

MALIN CRAIG,

Brigadier General, U. S. A.

Chief of Staff.

1st Ind.

Hq. Third Army Corps, American E. F., March 21, 1919.

To Commanding General, 32nd Division, American E. F.

1. For his information.

2. The Corps Commander desires to express his keen

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

appreciation of the high compliment paid the Third Corps troops and the Divisions of the Corps by the Army Commander.

By Command of Major General Hines:

CAMPBELL KING

Chief of Staff.

By Command of Major General Lassiter:

R. M. BECK, JR.,

Colonel, General Staff,

Chief of Staff.

HEADQUARTERS THIRTY-SECOND DIVISION,
AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCES,

Rengsdorf, Germany.

General Order

28th March, 1919.

No. 23.

1. It is with sincere pleasure that the Division Commander publishes to the command the following letter from the Commander-in-Chief:

AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCES,

Office of the Commander-in-Chief.

France, March 24, 1919.

"Major-General William Lassiter,

"Commanding 32d Division, American E. F.

"My Dear General Lassiter:

"Please extend to the officers and men of the 32d Division, my sincere compliments upon their appearance and upon the splendid condition of the artillery and transportation at the review and inspection on March 15th. In fact the condition of your command was what would be expected of a division with such a splendid fighting record.

"After training for several months following its arrival in February, 1918, it entered the line in Alsace and held this sector until the time of the Aisne-Marne offensive, when it moved to that active front. On July 30th, it entered the line on the Ourcq, and in the course of its action captured Cierges, Bellevue Farm and the Bois de la Planchette. The attack was

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

resumed on August 1st, the division pushing ahead until it crossed the Vesle, and captured the town of Fismes. On August 28th it again entered the line and launched attacks which resulted in the capture of Juvigny at the cost of severe casualties. During the Meuse-Argonne offensive the 32d Division entered the line on September 30th, and by its persistence in that sector it penetrated the Krenihilde Stellung, taking Romagne and following the enemy to the northeastern edge of the Bois de Bantheville. On November 8th the division took up the pursuit of the enemy east of the Meuse until the time when hostilities were suspended.

"Since the signing of the Armistice the 32d Division has had the honor to act as a part of the Army of Occupation. For the way in which all ranks have performed their duties in this capacity, I have only the warmest praise and approval. The pride of your officers and men, justified by such a record, will insure the same high morale which has been present in the division during its stay in France. I want each man to know my appreciation of the work he has done and of the admiration in which he is held by the rest of his comrades in the American Expeditionary Forces.

"Sincerely Yours," (Signed) JOHN J. PERSHING."

2. This order will be read to the troops at the first formation following its receipt and will be posted upon bulletin boards. WILLIAM LASSITER, Major-General, Commanding.

158TH F. A. BRIGADE

MEMORANDUM: A. E. F. 11th April, 1919.

1. The following letter received by the Brigade Commander from Brigadier General A. S. Fleming, is published for the information of the Brigade:

Headquarters, 5th F. A. Brigade,
American E. F., A. P. O. 745, 4th April, 1919.

From: Brigadier General A. S. Fleming, U. S. A.

To: Commanding General, 158th F. A. Brigade,

Subject: Commendation of Officers and Men of the 158th F. A. Brigade.

1. Because of my relief from duty with the 158th F. A.

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

Brigade, during my absence therefrom I was unable to publish an order relinquishing command of that Brigade.

2. Will you therefore please convey to all the members of the Brigade my great appreciation of their work and their accomplishments while I had the honor to command the Brigade.

3. In the training area the Brigade strove to complete its mastery of the technical details that would fit it to take its place at the front. According to the statements of the authorities of the training camp at Camp Coetquidan the Brigade surpassed all previous standards attained by the eight Brigades which had preceded it there, and established new records which have not since been equalled.

The Brigade received its baptism of fire on the 26th of September, 1918, in the Meuse-Argonne offensive and acquitted itself with entire credit. From the 8th to the 29th of October, 1918, the Brigade participated in all the engagements of the 17th French Army Corps of Verdun, and there earned the reputation of being one of the best fighting artillery Brigades in the A. E. F.

Upon the cessation of the activities of the 17th French Army Corps the Brigade was again attached to the 32d Division, and with the latter crossed the Meuse at Dun-sur-Meuse in pursuit of the retreating enemy. On the morning of the 11th of November, 1918, when news of the Armistice reached it, all the regiments of the Brigade were in action, closer to the German frontier than any other artillery of the Allied armies north of Verdun.

On the march to the Rhine the Brigade earned the approbation of all and the commendations of the Corps and Division Commanders for its excellent marching, march discipline and care of its animals. In the Coblenz Bridgehead, as part of the American Army of Occupation, the Brigade attained standards which later resulted in the high commendation of the Commander-in-Chief.

These accomplishments resulted from a zeal and a devotion to duty which are beyond all praise, and would have been

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

impossible without the loyal co-operation and untiring effort of both officers and enlisted men.

(Signed) A. S. Fleming, Brigadier General, U. S. A.

By command of Brigadier General Craig:

A. L. Richmond, Major F. A., Acting Adjutant.

158TH F. A. BRIGADE

A. E. F.

General Order

17th April, 1919.

No. 20.

1. The following letter of the Division Commander is, by his express desire, published to the Regimental Commanders and to the Regiments of the Brigade:

HEADQUARTERS THIRTY-SECOND DIVISION,
AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCES.

Rengsdorf, Germany, 17th April, 1919.

Brigadier General Adrian S. Fleming, Commanding,

158th Field Artillery Brigade,

American Expeditionary Forces.

My dear General Fleming:

Before the 158th F. A. Brigade starts on its way home, I desire to express to you and the Brigade in what high estimation I hold the services which the Brigade has rendered while in France and in Germany.

The Brigade came under my command as a part of the 32nd Division, when I took over the command of that division for the march to the Rhine. On this long and arduous march, so trying on men and animals, the artillery always showed up to advantage. Its good discipline and high spirit carried it successfully through all the obstacles and difficulties to be overcome. Since we have been in the Coblenz Bridgehead I have always felt that I could rely upon the artillery to meet any new development which might arise. Their situation has not always been easy, in that they have been transferred from Division to Division during the active operations, and so have had to get established in each new organization; but I can

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

testify that with the 32nd Division their capabilities have been recognized and relied upon. The regiments of the Brigade, the 322nd Field Artillery, the 323rd Field Artillery and the 324th Field Artillery have the right to take back with them to the United States the consciousness of work well done.

I would ask you to convey to the regimental commanders and to the regiments of the Brigade my congratulations on their fine accomplishments.

Sincerely Yours,

(Signed) WM. LASSITER,
Major General, U. S. Army,
Commanding 32nd Division.

2. This letter is a tribute to the loyalty, devotion to duty, and patriotism of every officer and enlisted man who contributed to the results which earned it.

Previously, during the Meuse-Argonne offensive, the Brigade supported, in battle, the 91st, 18th (French), 29th and 32nd Divisions; and with all these Divisions this work of all of its units was of the same standard as that to which the Division Commander bears testimony.

"The right to take back with them the consciousness of work well done" is an achievement of the highest order and an honor second to none. They have earned this right and are entitled to the pride and distinction of its possession.

By Command of Brigadier-General Fleming:

A. L. RICHMOND,
Major F. A. Acting Adjutant.

Station List of Unit Since Arrival in the American E. F.

Unit 323rd F. A. Battery F, Sailed from Philadelphia, June 10th, 1918, Arrived in England June 28th, 1918, on Transport "Agapenor," at Birkenhead, opposite Liverpool, England.

STATION	ARRIVED	LEFT
ENGLAND		
Camp Winnal-Down Winchester	28 June '18.	1 July '18.
South Hampton	1 July	1 July
FRANCE		
Le-Havre	2 July	3 July
Maure	4 July	5 July
Loheac	5 July	17 Aug.
Camp-De-Coetquidan, Guer	17 Aug.	22 Sept.
Revigny	24 Sept.	24 Sept.
Vilotte-devont-Louppy	24 Sept.	24 Sept.
Waly	25 Sept.	25 Sept.
3 Kilo's North of Parois	26 Sept.	27 Sept.
½ Kilo West of Esnes	27 Sept.	3 Oct.
Camp-Gallieni, 2 Kilo's East of Nixeville	4 Oct.	4 Oct.
Verdun	5 Oct.	5 Oct.
Cote-de-Talou	5 Oct.	9 Oct.
Brabant-Sur-Meuse	10 Oct.	29 Oct.
Bois-de-Ville	30 Oct.	31 Oct.
Bois-de-Bethelanville	1 Nov.	1 Nov.
Bois-de-Montfacon	1 Nov.	2 Nov.
Madeleine Farm—Cunel	3 Nov.	9 Nov.
2 Kilo's S. W. of Haraumont	10 Nov.	10 Nov.
Ecurey	10 Nov.	16 Nov.
Jametz	16 Nov.	17 Nov.
Noers	17 Nov.	18 Nov.
Cosnes	18 Nov.	20 Nov.
BELGIUM		
Guerlange	20 Nov.	21 Nov.
LUXEMBOURG		
Kopstal	21 Nov.	22 Nov.
Imbringen	22 Nov.	23 Nov.
Beidweiler	23 Nov.	1 Dec.

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

GERMANY

Alsdorf	1 Dec.	2 Dec.
Messerich	2 Dec.	3 Dec.
Ginsdorf	3 Dec.	5 Dec.
Udersdorf	5 Dec.	6 Dec.
Kelberg	6 Dec.	7 Dec.
Boos	7 Dec.	9 Dec.
Mayen	9 Dec.	10 Dec.
Kruft	10 Dec.	13 Dec.
Heimbach	13 Dec.	14 Dec.
Ruscheid	14 Dec.	15 Dec.
Urbach-Uberdorf	15 Dec.	25 Jan. '19.
Dernbach	25 Jan.	22 April

HOMEWARD BOUND

U. S. S. Von Steuben.

FRANCE

Brest	26 April	5 May
Hoboken, N. J.	13 May	Camp Merritt

Roster of F Battery 323d L. F. A

Rank	Address
Captain Dempsey, John B.....	.....1201 Leader News Bldg., Cleveland, Ohio
First Lieutenant Platt, Rutherford H.....	.....115 Fifth St., Garden City, N. Y.
First Lieutenant Bradford, Boyce E.....	New Concord, Ohio
Second Lieutenant Breese, Lee W.....	Batavia, N. Y.
Second Lieutenant Holtz, William E.....	Leetonia, Ohio
First Sergeant Rayburn, Fred.....	R.F.D. No. 1, Fort Gay, W. Va.
Mess Sergeant Patterson, Martin M.....	Beaver Falls, Pa.
Stable Sergeant Voemastek, Charles J.....	Rib Lake, Wis.
Supply Sergeant Simpson, Robert C.....	Woodlawn, Pa.
Sergeant Riggs, McDonald H.....	532 Park Road, Ambridge, Pa.
Sergeant Binder, Milton.....	686 Franklin St., Woodlawn, Pa.
Sergeant Beligoy, John.....	1104 E. 77th St., Cleveland, Ohio
Sergeant Potter, John B.....	612 Washington Ave., Monaca, Pa.
Sergeant Nord, John A.....	R.F.D. No. 23, Limesville, Pa.
Sergeant Staub, Charles J.....	R.F.D. No. 2, Monaca, Pa.
Sergeant Groscost, Gilbert.....	2009 5th Ave., Beaver Falls, Pa.
Sergeant Groscost, Robert R.....	Beaver, Pa.
Sergeant Crawford, Harry E.....	R.F.D. No. 2, Monaca, Pa.
Sergeant Lenhoff, James E.....	1383 S. 3rd St., Columbus, Ohio
Corporal Jinaros, John G.....	202 Station St., Woodlawn, Pa.
Corporal Torrance, Mac S.....	R.F.D. No. 2, Murdocksville, Pa.
Corporal Dobbin, Charles A.....	Beaver, Pa.
Corporal Elmer, Edward M.....	Monaca, Pa.
Corporal Stjernquist, Gust E.....	20th St. and 8th Ave., Beaver Falls, Pa.
Corporal Smiley, William D.....	Koppel, Pa.
Corporal Christie, Herbert H.....	Parker Township, Butler, Pa.
Corporal Sommers, Frederick F.....	New Brighton, Pa.
Corporal McCann, Leo R.....	2211 13th Ave., Beaver Falls, Pa.
Corporal Cantwell, Dennis A.....	Cannelton, Pa.
Corporal Moorehouse, William A.....	.....1027 Washington Ave., Monaca, Pa.
Corporal Waite, Lowell O.....	Beaver Falls, Pa.
Corporal Deveny, Joseph M.....	Beaver St., Colona, Pa.
Corporal Jackson, Dewitt L.....	Bruin, Pa.
Corporal Hanson, George.....	2022 W. 50th St., Cleveland, Ohio.
Corporal Aley, Clifford S.....	716 8th St., Beaver Falls, Pa.
Corporal Woodfield, Charles.....	242 Ohio Ave., Colona, Pa.
Corporal McVey, Howard B.....	Butte, Mont.

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

Rank	Address
Corporal Hage, Oscar H.....	1324 Washington Ave., Monaca, Pa.
Corporal Hicks, James.....	South Portsmouth, Ky.
Corporal Patterson, James C.....	140 Mercer St., Butler, Pa.
Corporal Brother, Jefferson D.....	Owingsville, Ky.
Cook Leibler, John R.....	535 Mifflin St., Butler, Pa.
Cook Dimett, Tode.....	3rd St., Midland, Pa.
Cook Rich, Ellwyn E.....	West Park, Ohio
Cook Young, James V.....	138 American Ave., Butler, Pa.
Horseshoer Irwin, Elwin L.....	R.F.D. No. 2, New Sheffield, Pa.
Horseshoer Davis, Gilbert H.....	South Heights, Pa.
Horseshoer Covert, Horace L.....	Slippery Rock, Pa.
Ch. Mechanic Koehler, Howard R.....	Beaver, Pa.
Mechanic Kanchat, Oliver W.....	Beaver, Pa.
Mechanic Marshall, John B.....	219 4th Ave., Woodlawn, Pa.
Sadler Hauber, Alfred.....	Cleveland, Ohio
Bugler Furgiuveli, Ernest.....	1120 Pacific Ave., Monaca, Pa.
Bugler Rossi, Frank.....	240 Station St., Woodlawn, Pa.
Bugler Chicchio, Pelino.....	345 Allegheny Ave., Aliquippa, Pa.
First Class Private Brown, Alfred S.....	Shippingport, Pa.
First Class Private Brown, Claude G.....	Chicora, Pa.
First Class Private Calhoun, Rolly L.....	Glasgow, Ky.
First Class Private Bryant, Robert E.....	Hicksville, Ky.
First Class Private Christy, John M.....	West Sunbury, Pa.
First Class Private Flannery, George E.....	.....
.....	1605 Linwood Ave., Cleveland, Ohio
First Class Private Fry, Clarence H.....	431 E. Jefferson St., Butler, Pa.
First Class Private Fry, Wilfred M.....	New Castle, Pa.
First Class Private Hastings, James T.....	.....
.....	226 Winn Ave., Winchester, Ky.
First Class Private Kelly, William H.....	.....
.....	416 Southern Ave., Springfield, Ohio
First Class Private Krampe, Paul E.....	.....
.....	3104 Woodbridge Ave., Cleveland, Ohio
First Class Private Liston, Thomas G.....	.....
.....	1200 Washington Ave., Monaca, Pa.
First Class Private Loche, Jay L.....	Toledo, Ohio
First Class Private Martin, James W.....	Darlington, Pa.
First Class Private McCalligan, John A.....	Box 24, Wickliff, Ohio
First Class Private Novak, Andrew J.....	.....
.....	2438 Marion Ave., Cleveland, Ohio
First Class Private Papa, Patsy.....	Midland, Pa.
First Class Private Rhein, Joseph A.....	R.F.D. No. 1, Beaver, Pa.
First Class Private Roberts, Joseph A.....	R.F.D. No. 1, Sausalito, Cal.
First Class Private Stevenson, James B.....	.....
.....	101 South St., Butler, Pa.
First Class Private Stull, Harvey M.....	Howard, Ohio

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

Rank	Address
First Class Private Thomas, Bruce E.....	1310 Offnare St., Portsmouth, Ohio
First Class Private Toomey, John.....	301 W. Fulton St., Butler, Pa.
First Class Private Wagoner, Frank E.....	R.F.D. No. 4, Beaver Falls, Pa.
First Class Private Walker, James C.....	Bruin, Pa.
First Class Sergeant Williams, Dana.....	Bartlett, Ohio
First Class Private Wolford, Harry L.....	Keister, Pa.
First Class Private Wright, Franklin E.....	722 Deck St., Steubenville, Ohio
Private Adams, Tom.....	Wallard, Ky.
Private Alberti, Battista.....	2414 9th Ave., Beaver Falls, Pa.
Private Alvey, Harry R.....	R.F.D. No. 2, Munsey, Ind.
Private Andrews, Howard M.....	7055 Central Ave., Pavis, Ill.
Private Andrews, Orrin J.....	Hickman, Ky.
Private Aurilio, Frank.....	2117 Collingwood Ave., Swissvale, Pa.
Private Baker, John.....	Forks of Elkhorn, Ky
Private Barbour, Robert G.....	Hickman, Ky.
Private Bivin, Veachede.....	Star Route, Carl, Ky.
Private Blackburn, Crit.....	Endicott, Ky.
Private Boles, Alfred L.....	R.F.D. No. 4, Glasgow, Ky.
Private Bonzo, Jake.....	South Portsmouth, Ky.
Private Buckley, Joe.....	414 West 2nd St., Hopkinsville, Ky.
Private Burchett, George.....	Prestonburg, Ky.
Private Butcher, Isaac A.....	Plumbers Landing, Ky.
Private Caldwell, Orville.....	Portsmouth, Ohio
Private Carrington, Earl A.....	El Paso, Texas
Private Cassin, James W.....	2419 W. Market St., Louisville, Ky.
Private Celletti, Domenico.....	Scottsdale, Pa.
Private Chapman, William H.....	Racine, Pa.
Private Chenot, Lucien G.....	328 Hickory St., Butler, Pa.
Private Chism, Charles.....	165 Winn Ave., Winchester, Ky.
Private Chivers, James G.....	Homesassa, Ky.
Private Clark, Alex.....	Pals Grove, Ky.
Private Clark, Orval.....	Star Route No. 3, Mt. Sterling, Ky.
Private Clinkenbeard, Granville.....	Bethel, Ky.
Private Collins, Flem.....	Brainard, Ky.
Private Conley, George.....	7070 Franklin Ave., Woodlawn, Pa.
Private Crisp, Lee.....	Dock, Ky.
Private Dawkins, John S.....	169 Spring St., Woodlawn, Pa.
Private De Roon, Ornie.....	167 Carbon St., Paterson, N. J.
Private Didelow, Denver D.....	White Mills, Ky.
Private Di Guilio, Luigi.....	133 Miner St., Aliquippa, Pa.
Private Fisher, Wilbur H.....	305 W. Diamond St., Butler, Pa.
Private Fletcher, Tom K.....	Bays, Ky.

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

Rank	Address
Private Forrest, Swale.....	1584 W. 25th St., Cleveland, Ohio
Private Foster, Clinton S.....	2532 Gallia St., Portsmouth, Ohio
Private Fowlkes, Burley.....	Oakton, Ky.
Private Frogue, Elijah.....	614 W. 8th St., Cincinnati, Ohio
Private Greer, Arthur M.....	35 Montrose Ave., Delaware, Ohio
Private Griffith, Murray C.....	247 S. 2nd St., Newark, Ohio
Private Gross, George Q.....	967 McKinley St., Toledo, Ohio
Private Gruchala, Leo R.....	246 Detroit St., Buffalo, N. Y.
Private Gusler, Ollie.....	Sonora, Ky.
Private Hagood, Vernon E.....	301 W. 109th St., New York, N. Y.
Private Harrod, Campbell.....	322 Park Ave., Frankfort, Ky.
Private Haynes, Joseph C.....	Ralston, Ky.
Private Hendricks, Arthur R.....	R.F.D. No. 3, Richwood, Ohio
Private Herndon, Alfred A.....	Fair Grove, Missouri
Private Hessey, Wilson J.....	1010 W. Main St., Fostoria, Ohio
Private Hill, Mark.....	208 5th St., Monaca, Pa.
Private Hopper, Walter C.....	2825 5th Ave., Beaver Falls, Pa.
Private Howarth, John W.....	1511 5th Ave., Beaver Falls, Pa.
Private Howell, Ben.....	Glenwood, Ky.
Private Huff, Allen E.....	Persimmon, Ky.
Private Hutchinson, William.....	Route No. 2, Wadsworth, Ohio
Private Hughes, Richmond P.....	Bee Log, N. C.
Private Jicha, Louis.....	3578 Independence St., Cleveland, Ohio
Private Keifer, Smith.....	R.F.D. No. 2, Hookstown, Pa.
Private Kresiclny, Andrew.....	2334 Elston Ave., Chicago, Ill.
Private Kruta, Miller.....	Thief River Falls, Minn.
Private Kurkowski, Walter.....	E. 63rd St., Cleveland, Ohio
Private Landgraff, John.....	R.F.D. No. 1, Fennelton, Pa.
Private Lane, Andrew D.....	Tulsa, Okla.
Private Lolli, Emilio.....	1st Ave., Woodlawn, Pa.
Private Lutkehaus, Louis F.....	1315 Lane St., Hamilton, Ohio
Private McDermott, Patrick.....	Woodlawn, Pa.
Private Miller, Francis H.....	516 Market Ave., Canton, Ohio
Private Miller, Leslie P.....	131 Baley St., Zanesville, Ohio
Private Nelson, Arthur.....	Leadwood, Missouri
Private Newbaur, Herman A.....	572 East Ave., Akron, Ohio
Private Neal, Percy A.....	No. 9 Chestnut St., Farmingham, Mass.
Private Parker, Tracy O.....	Euclid Ave., Cleveland, Ohio
Private Rabinovitz, Joseph.....	418 Neshannock Ave., New Castle, Pa.
Private Reed, Frank.....	Congo, Ohio
Private Reilley, Donald.....	150 E. 5th South, Salt Lake City, Utah
Private Rennie, John.....	Third Ave. and 8th St., Freedom, Pa.
Private Robbins, Leo.....	29 Afton Ave., Crafton, Pa.
Private Samerdyke, Frank E.....	1914 Indiana Ave., Cleveland, Ohio
Private Sanchez, Ezequias.....	Solomonville, Arizona

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

Rank	Address
Private Saxton, Benjamin.....	805 Arlington Ave., Canton, Ohio
Private Sherbiniski, Joseph.....	15 Monroe Ave., Woodlawn, Pa.
Private Shillady, Harry J.....	17 Ford St., Rochester, N. Y.
Private Slutsky, Mayer.....	3 Le Roy Court, Cincinnati, Ohio
Private Snyder, Carl R.....	R.F.D. No. 3, Harrisville, Pa.
Private Szkutt, Ignacz.....	Bessemer St., Lyndora, Pa.
Private Troyanowski, Harry J.....	1604 2nd Ave., Beaver Falls, Pa.
Private Tyler, Louis.....	76 Loraine Ave., Columbus, Ohio
Private Vance, Horace E.....	R.F.D. No. 2, New Castle, Pa.
Private Vanryckeghem, Jules.....	Metamora, Ohio
Private Vermeullen, Alphonso.....	R.F.D. No. 17, Metamora, Ohio
Private Weinstein, Alex.....	Middle St., Midland, Pa.
Private Whitehead, Stephen H.....	.....
.....	1640 Crawford Road, Cleveland, Ohio
Private Wiley, Johnson J.....	.....St. Clairsville, Ohio
Private Winkle, Lawrence.....	Hopewell Ave., Aliquippa, Pa.
Private Yoakum, Charles.....	.....Leipsic, Ohio
Private Young, Tompie.....	Glasgow, Ky.
Private Zigarevich, Sergey.....	Bessemer St., Lyndora, Pa.

Roster of Former Members of Battery F

Rank	Address
Captain Archer, Herman N.....	San Francisco, Cal.
Captain Middleton, Henry A.....	Toledo, Ohio
First Lieutenant Dempsey, Ernest C.....	Cleveland, Ohio
First Lieutenant Bacon, Louis A.....	Indianapolis, Ind.
First Lieutenant Colyer, Charles M.....	Union Commerce Bldg., Cleveland, Ohio
Second Lieutenant Calhoun, Floyd B.....	Akron, Ohio
Second Lieutenant Patterson, Jefferson.....	Dayton, Ohio
Second Lieutenant Wilson, Willard W.....	Hillsboro, Ohio
Sergeant Emery, Thomas W.....	Ambridge, Pa.
Sergeant Manuszak, Casimier.....	Columbus, Ohio
Sergeant McEntee, William E.....	Ambridge, Pa.
Sergeant Stewart, Edward L.....	Ambridge, Pa.
Sergeant Rea, William Ross.....	Baden, Pa.
Sergeant Small, Phillip L.....	Cleveland, Ohio
Sergeant Kappler, Norman G.....	Cleveland, Ohio
Sergeant Frazier, Max.....	Rochester, Pa.
Sergeant Shriver, Louis M.....	Beaver Falls, Pa.
Corporal McCabe, William S.....	Ambridge, Pa.
Corporal Kennedy, Lynn H.....	Woodlawn, Pa.
Corporal Reese, Frank.....	Aliquippa, Pa.
Corporal Wolman, Henry J.....	Butler, Pa.
Corporal Wright, Lewis F.....	Beaver, Pa.
Cook Fetzer, John Allen.....	Aliquippa, Pa.
Mechanic Koenig, Alfred.....	Cincinnati, Ohio
First Class Private Bell, Clayton S.....	Butler, Pa.
Private Angert, Clarence.....	Butler, Pa.
Private Burns, Ralph L.....	Colona, Pa.
Private Brooks, Irving.....	Detroit, Mich.
Private Barnhart, Raymond E.....	Butler, Pa.
Private Black, Braden M.....	Butler, Pa.
Private Brandon, Allen.....	Butler, Pa.
Private Brigdon, Frank.....	Butler, Pa.
Private Bartley, Roy.....	Butler, Pa.
Private Cain, John S.....	Aliquippa, Pa.
Private Cantwell, John B.....	Cannelton, Pa.
Private Cochran, Elmer J.....	Woodlawn, Pa.
Private Cox, Harry.....	Beaver, Pa.
Private Culmer, Howard.....	Beaver Falls, Pa.

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

Rank	Address
Private Chappell, Frank H.....	Fulton, Ky.
Private Cobb, Hubert H.....	
Private Colvin, Edward J.....	Cambridge, Ohio
Private Claypool, Curtis M.....	Butler, Pa.
Private Corliss, Roy L.....	
Private Davis, William McK.....	New Sheffield, Pa.
Private Del Signore, Attilio.....	Woodlawn, Pa.
Private Dimmer, John.....	Woodlawn, Pa.
Private Devine, Charles T.....	Beaver Falls, Pa.
Private Donahy, William J.....	Cumberland, Md.
Private Dinello, Carlo.....	Aliquippa, Pa.
Private Denton, James H.....	Atlanta, Ga.
Private Elk, Frank C.....	Woodlawn, Pa.
Private Evans, Charles.....	Woodlawn, Pa.
Private Garber, Harry E.....	Beaver Falls, Pa.
Private Gentile, Seme.....	Aliquippa, Pa.
Private George, John.....	Woodlawn, Pa.
Private Gilbert, Emmit.....	Beaver Falls, Pa.
Private Gordon, Isaac E.....	New Brighton, Pa.
Private Grim, Addie H. R.....	Beaver, Pa.
Private Goldrick, Osborn.....	Cleveland, Ohio
Private Glicker, Gus.....	Cleveland, Ohio
Private Fassold, Everett L.....	Butler, Pa.
Private Fitzsimmons, Thomas G.....	Butler, Pa.
Private Hinzman, James T.....	Industry, Pa.
Private Huffman, Charles.....	Homewood, Pa.
Private Hull, Joseph E.....	Darlington, Pa.
Private Hulmes, Seth L.....	Beaver Falls, Pa.
Private Hunter, Joe.....	Woodlawn, Pa.
Private Hockenberry, George C.....	Slippery Rock, Pa.
Private Hagany, William.....	Cleveland, Ohio
Private Hartman, Russell A.....	Canton, Ohio
Private Hawkins, Robert L.....	Moore's Ferry, Ky.
Private Hill, Pearl R.....	Cleveland, Ohio
Private Humm, William J.....	Toledo, Ohio
Private Haas, Arthur E.....	Cleveland, Ohio
Private Handleman, William.....	Ottumwa, Iowa
Private Harp, Rufus.....	Checotah, Okla.
Private Jordan, Domenico.....	Monaca, Pa.
Private Jordan, Ralph.....	Monaca, Pa.
Private Johnson, Roy E.....	Butler, Pa.
Private Kewbefer, Mike.....	Woodlawn, Pa.
Private Kitson, George E.....	Woodlawn, Pa.
Private Kline, Melvin F.....	Woodlawn, Pa.
Private Knott, Fred J.....	Woodlawn, Pa.

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

Rank	Address
Private Kelly, Richard J.....	Bruin, Pa.
Private Kuisch, Afanasy.....	Butler, Pa.
Private Keck, Herman E.....	Butler, Pa.
Private Knessebeck, Edward.....	Toledo, Ohio
Private Lafferty, John.....	Darlington, Pa.
Private Lyons, Walter.....	Beaver Falls, Pa.
Private Lepley, William.....	Butler, Pa.
Private Logan, Glenn B.....	Butler, Pa.
Private Leimpach, Benjamin.....	
Private Le Roy, George.....	Butler, Pa.
Private Le Roy, Frank J.....	Los Angeles, Cal.
Private McGuckin, William L.....	
Private McKenzie, John B.....	Woodlawn, Pa.
Private McQuiston, Samuel.....	Butler, Pa.
Private Menetis, Nick.....	Weirton, W. Va.
Private Miller, Howard.....	Butler, Pa.
Private Miller, Arthur P.....	Butler, Pa.
Private Moran, Joseph M.....	Colona, Pa.
Private Muntean, Eli.....	Woodlawn, Pa.
Private Myers, James W.....	Monaca, Pa.
Private Mueller, Theodore E.....	Butler, Pa.
Private Murtland, Budd A.....	Butler, Pa.
Private Peroli, Domenico.....	Woodlawn, Pa.
Private Peterman, Clyde E.....	Beaver Falls, Pa.
Private Pettit, Daniel B.....	Shippingport, Pa.
Private Popciak, Jacob P.....	Butler, Pa.
Private Poskanny, Nikifor.....	Butler, Pa.
Private Primatic, August.....	Woodlawn, Pa.
Private Phillips, Lee.....	Butler, Pa.
Private Parsons, Everett.....	Toronto, Ohio
Private Rhodes, Charles F.....	Beaver Falls, Pa.
Private Riscinski, Bronselaw.....	Woodlawn, Pa.
Private Rock, Sullivan.....	Aliquippa, Pa.
Private Ritzert, Charles F.....	Butler, Pa.
Private Robinson, Clifford J.....	Butler, Pa.
Private Rodgers, Thomas.....	Butler, Pa.
Private Roessing, Howard L.....	Butler, Pa.
Private Robinson, Samuel E.....	Butler, Pa.
Private Raofsky, Samuel.....	
Private Sakutt, Pawel.....	Lyndora, Pa.
Private Sarakaka, Demetric.....	
Private Schell, Carl A.....	Beaver Falls, Pa.
Private Seonty, Rocco.....	Woodlawn, Pa.
Private Shamp, Raymond E.....	Shippingport, Pa.
Private Springer, Harry A.....	Shippingport, Pa.

A History of Battery F 323d Field Artillery

Rank	Address
Private Stoffel, Alvin H.....	Ambridge, Pa.
Private Snyder, John.....	Butler, Pa.
Private Sintz, Mathias.....	Butler, Pa.
Private Slater, Edmund.....	Butler, Pa.
Private Spohn, Daniel M.....	Butler, Pa.
Private Shea, Frank.....	Lima, Ohio
Private Simonson, Claude L.....	Wellington, Ohio
Private Snyder, Henry A.....	Butler, Pa.
Private Schoaf, Elmer S.....	New Brighton, Pa.
Private Shultz, James A.....	Butler, Pa.
Private Taylor, John P.....	Butler, Pa.
Private Urwin, David.....	Monaca, Pa.
Private Uhlenbrock, Albert.....	Cincinnati, Ohio
Private Veltry, Charles.....	Woodlawn, Pa.
Private Veri, Guiseppi.....	
Private Vindero, Liberato.....	Columbus, Ohio
Private Van Meter, William C.....	Ambridge, Pa.
Private Walton, William.....	Van Port, Pa.
Private Weitz, Raymond.....	Beaver Falls, Pa.
Private Whitt, Wayne.....	Butler, Pa.
Private Wilson, Charles F.....	
Private Waltman, Albert F.....	Butler, Pa.
Private Wagner, Charles W.....	Butler, Pa.
Private Yoho, Roy A.....	Homewood, Pa.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 003 901 136 0